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IT'S WHAT SUNDAYS ARE ALL ABOUT

No.344 April 26, 2009

WIN A SEAT AT KENT'S FIRST-EVER POKER CUP FINAL TO WIN £20,000

BETRAYAL

Campaigners' fury at Government's decision on former Gurkhas' rights to settle in the UK

By **JENNA PUDELEK** and **JAMES ALEXANDRE**

ANGER and dismay have greeted the Government's "insulting" decision on the rights of former Gurkha soldiers to settle in the UK.

Border and immigration minister Phil Woolas announced a new policy he said would allow another 10,000 of the Nepalese former soldiers and their families entry to Britain.

However, the Gurkha Justice Campaign said the complex criteria attached to the decision meant that in reality only a few hundred of the veterans who fought in the British Army would be eligible.

Retired Gurkha Cllr Dhan Gurung, a Lib Dem member of Folkestone Town Council, told Kent on Sunday: "This is a worse decision than in 2004 because the Gurkhas have waited a long time for a good announcement.

"Everyone was thinking we will get justice and get a good decision because Britain is the mother of democracy and the father of human rights. But we did not see that today."

In 2004, the Home Office ruled that only Gurkhas who had been discharged from the Army after 1997 could apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK, in the same way as other Commonwealth soldiers.

After years of campaigning, a High Court ruled in September, 2008, that the Government's existing immigration policy of excluding pre-1997 Gurkha veterans from settling was unlawful.

Campaigners wanted former Gurkha soldiers to have the automatic right to settle in Britain.

Gurkha justice campaigner Peter Caroll, a Lib Dem member of Shepway District Council, said: "It is devastatingly bad news. It is an absolute betrayal. It flies in the face of the public support and the court judgement. It is the Government turning its back on these brave soldiers and their families."

Gurkhas, known as 'the bravest of the brave' with their motto 'better to die than live a coward', have been a part of the British Army for nearly 200 years.

Ashamed

In November last year, two Gurkha soldiers from the Royal Gurkha Rifles, based at Shorncliffe Barracks in Folkestone, died fighting in the Helmand province of Afghanistan.

More than 200,000 Gurkhas fought for the Allies in the two World Wars, with 43,000 losing their lives.

Actress Joanna Lumley, whose father served alongside the Gurkhas in Burma during World War Two, said: "This one page of criteria has taken the Government four months to come up with. I'm ashamed of our administration."

Damian Green, shadow immigration minister and MP for Ashford, said: "The Government is trying to evade the effects of a very clear court judgement.

"This is an insult to the Gurkhas. We have said all along that the Government should not try to challenge the courts and they would have done better to listen."

The criteria includes Gurkhas having awards for gallantry, leadership or bravery, having spent 20 or more years in the brigade, having a close family member already in the UK and having three years' continuous lawful settlement here.

Cllr Caroll said the Lib Dems had put forward an opposition Commons debate on the issue for Wednesday, and he hoped MPs would overturn the Government's decision.

Cllr Gurung, who was in the British Army for 18 years serving in Bosnia, Brunei and Sierra Leone before retiring in 2004, added: "These Gurkha soldiers fought for the country and the Crown and they get this treatment from the Government, which is disgraceful.

"It is not a good decision, this is not justice."

On Friday Mr Woolas said: "This guidance honours the service, commitment and gallantry of those who served with the Gurkhas brigade.

"Where there are strong reasons, there has been scope for Gurkhas who retired prior to July, 1997, to apply to settle in the UK.

"In fact, because of rules brought in by the Government, we have already welcomed around 6,000 Gurkhas and family members to Britain.

"Now, another 10,000 Gurkhas and family members will be able to benefit from our revised guidance."

Picture: PHIL HOUGHTON

DISGRACE: Campaigners say the Government has turned its back on the Gurkha soldiers

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Kent today

TODAY: It will be dry for a time with sunny intervals. Cloud is expected to increase by the afternoon. Variable winds. Max temp 12-15C (54-59F).
TONIGHT: It may stay dry in the west, eastern areas will have rain at times. Light winds across the region. Min temp 6-9C (43-48F).

Around Britain

		°C	°F			°C	°F
Aberdeen	cloudy	14	57	London	fair	14	57
Belfast	fair	15	59	Liverpool	fair	15	59
Birmingham	cloudy	12	54	Manchester	fair	15	59
B'mouth	fair	15	59	Newcastle	fair	15	59
Bristol	sun	12	54	Norwich	fair	15	59
Cardiff	fair	13	55	Oxford	fair	15	59
Cork	rain	12	54	Southsea	fair	14	57
Edinburgh	cloudy	13	55	S'hampton	fair	14	57
Glasgow	cloudy	12	54	Southport	sun	–	–
Isle of Man	fair	12	54	Swansea	fair	12	54
Leeds	fair	14	57	Torquay	fair	13	55

Sun & moon

Sunrise	5.30am	Sunset	8.11pm	Lighting up times 8.41pm to 5.24am
Moonrise	5.30am	Moonset	10.46pm	

High Tides

	Today				Tomorrow			
		ft (m)		ft (m)		ft (m)		ft (m)
Dover	00.03	6.7	12.27	6.8	00.43	6.7	13.09	6.6
Margate	01.39	4.6	13.36	4.5	01.52	4.7	14.15	4.5
St Mary's	06.08	5.7	18.27	5.7	06.46	5.7	19.07	5.7

Week ahead

monday — Showers. max 14C min 7C
tuesday — Sharp showers. max 14C min 7C
wednesday — Isolated showers. max 16C min 8C
thursday — Rain later on. max 13C min 9C
friday — Sunny spells. max 16C min 8C
saturday — Isolated showers. max 17C min 7C

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Voice of Radio Kent leads today's charity charge in London

Marathon's capital gains will tax John to the limit

By **CHRIS MURPHY**
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

FAMED for his love of beer as well as being a BBC Radio Kent presenter, John Warnett has put down his pint long enough to get into shape for today's Flora London Marathon.

The breakfast show host is raising cash for the Demelza House children's hospice at Bobbing, near Sittingbourne, by pounding the streets of the capital.

Usually, his most vigorous workout, apart from a trip to the pub, is a stroll across a golf course. But the sports lover is determined to finish the gruelling run and has been training hard for months.

He admits the furthest he has run in recent years, before starting his training regime, was just 20 yards. Mr Warnett agreed to do the Marathon in February last year. Now he can cover 20 miles without needing a rest.

He said: "I'd never run anywhere – if I ran to the end of the road I'd have to stop.

"But then I started training and I got to a mile, then five, and now I've done 20 miles without stopping, so it's been a slow build-up."

Also taking part is former Kent and South East England champion runner Meredith Pannett.

The 37-year-old is raising funds for Benenden Hospital, where she works as a bookings administrator, after being treated there for a condition that prevented her from running.

She said: "I was suffering from inflammation around my hamstring, which I thought would end my career, but after treatment at Benenden it's much better and I'm able to run again."

Kent fire crew manager Daniel Capon, 33, from Ashford, is based at Forest Hill fire station. Mr Capon, a firefighter for 11 years, is running the London Marathon for the second time.

He said: "Taking part is a great personal challenge and I'm hoping to complete the course in under four hours. I'll be raising funds for the firefighters' charity."

Runners Lynne Taylor, Kathryn Heathfield, Kate Herrington and Richard Hussey, all from Maidstone, are raising money for the Heart of Kent Hospice.

Liz Smythe, from Faversham, will raise money for Bliss, a charity which helps premature babies and their families.

She has been a nanny for 20 years and in 2001 was employed by a family to care for their baby twins and toddler brother.

Before starting her second marathon, Ms Smythe said: "I spent a very happy and rewarding three-and-a-half years looking after them. I've been lucky enough to stay in contact with the family and regularly spend time with them."

Chris Atkin, executive headteacher of the newly-formed Dover Catholic Federation of Schools, is running in aid of Children with Leukaemia. And this race is special for him.

The 52-year-old said: "I will run in honour of Jake Owen, a pupil of St Edmund's who late last year lost his three-year battle with the disease, aged 17.

"I want to raise £2,000 and would appreciate sponsorship, no matter how small."

News and sport updated daily online
www.kentnews.co.uk

STRETCHING OUT: BBC Radio Kent's John Warnett has been training hard

HOT-FOOT: Daniel Capon, from Ashford, is taking part for the second time

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G CASINO at Westwood Cross in Broadstairs has teamed up with KOS Media to give one lucky reader a place in the final of the Kent Poker Cup.

The reader will be given a stake to the value of £500 to play with in this winner-takes-all final on Sunday, May 3. The winner of the final with go home with a grand prize of £20,000.

The competition is open to everyone over the age of 18 and even if you are new to poker then don't worry as full instructions on how to play will be given.

The game will be a professionally dealt Texas hold 'em, so get practicing your 'poker face' now.

The tournament will only be part of the fun – there will also be a free buffet, and you can enjoy the unique atmosphere of this state-of-the-art casino, including music and a late bar.

If you are not the lucky winner of our competition, then you can always enter one of the qualifying heats.

There is a £25 entry final qualifier on Saturday, May 2 at 2pm, but there are smaller qualifiers during the week as well. For more details telephone G Casino on 01843 579999 or visit www.gcasino.co.uk.

Competition

To enter the competition simply answer the following question:

- ***What poker game will be played in the tournament?***

Send your answer, together with name, address and contact telephone number to: Poker Competition, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford Kent TN25 6SR. You can also email the answer with your name and address to pokercomp@kosmedia.co.uk. The closing date is Wednesday, April 29, 2009.

You can also text your answer to 81800, by sending POKER, followed by a space, the answer, a space and your name and address. Messages cost 25p plus standard network charges. The service is provided by g8wave London N7. No purchase necessary.

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If you do not wish to receive any literature please write 'no literature' on your entry.

Joint operation

THREE men and two women were arrested following an operation between Kent police and trading standards officers which targeted a gang accused of preying on elderly and vulnerable homeowners across Kent.

They are suspected of being part of an organised network which cold-called at the homes of the vulnerable, offering to carry out repair work at inflated prices.

Two men from the Maidstone area have been charged with 26 offences between them – ranging from fraud and burglary.

To see this search 'Gulbenkian'
@ yourkenttv.co.uk

Kent theatre, which may still seem a youngster in its field, celebrates its 40th anniversary in this year

Touchpaper lit for coal power station

By **JENNA PUDELEK**
jenna.pudelek@kosmedia.co.uk

A NEW coal-fired power station at Kingsnorth looks set to go-ahead – but not without the technology to at least partially curb its harmful emissions.

In a significant change in policy, the Energy and Climate Change Secretary Ed Miliband, announced no new coal plants would be approved without demonstrating carbon capture and storage (CCS) ability.

Currently the technology to capture CO2 emissions from fossil fuels and store them does not exist on a commercial scale.

But Mr Miliband told the Commons on Thursday energy companies would only have to demonstrate CCS on a "substantial proportion" of any new coal-powered plant before it was built.

He said that by the early 2020s, the technology would be 'retro-fitted' on the whole station – reducing emissions by 90 per cent.

Environmental groups have welcomed the change in policy to ban unabated coal-fired power stations.

However, there are concerns the technology remains unproven on a large scale for the continuing reliance on fossil fuels.

Dr Caroline Lucas, leader of the Green Party and a MEP for the South East, said: "It is certainly welcome that Kingsnorth could not go ahead unless it had CCS technology.

"In theory the words sound good, but we still do not know if it is going to be viable.

"There is an enormous risk – the bottom line is that we should not be dealing with coal. We can meet our energy needs through efficiency savings, renewables, in reducing demand, using a bit more gas as a transition, so CCS is still the wrong direction."

Kingsnorth on the Hoo Peninsula was always likely to be the first in a new generation of coal-fired power stations.

The plant, owned by German energy giant E.ON, is a frontrunner to be among those chosen as demonstration sites.

In Wednesday's Budget Chancellor Alistair Darling announced there was funding for up to four CCS pilots as part of an extra £1.4 billion package to support low carbon industries.

PIPELINE: A diagram of Thames Cluster

Dr Lucas said: "Certainly the announcement about pilot projects in the budget, reaffirmed by Ed Miliband, certainly brings Kingsnorth several steps closer to fruition.

"The point is that there are tried and tested technologies right now that are better to invest in that lead to emissions reductions and job creation."

Mr Miliband has proposed new plants demonstrate carbon capture of around 400MW of gross output.

Coal is dirtiest of the fossil fuels in terms of CO2 emissions.

Environmentalist George Monbiot said that with only one-fifth of total emissions captured the abated coal plants would still be much worse than unabated gas plants.

Meanwhile, E.ON has welcomed the announcement. Its chief executive Dr Paul Golby said: "This is a vital step by the Government that recognises the critical role that carbon capture and storage will play in decarbonising the UK and, if we can lead the way as a nation, the world."

"To that end, we propose that the CO2 from Kingsnorth should be captured and then stored as part of a 'Thames Cluster' that supports the whole of the South East, the highest energy region of the UK."

The energy giant said the best way forward would be to link a number of fossil fuel-fired plants and other industrial sites to a single 'carbon transportation system'.

Dr Golby said that work had already started to identify potential routes to connect to Kingsnorth to the proposed pipeline system that would transport the trapped carbon to the Hewett gas field in the North Sea.

E.ON will find out whether Kingsnorth has gained approval after a consultation on the proposals is completed this summer.

Greg Clark, the shadow energy and climate change secretary, accused the Government of adopting Conservative policy on CCS.

The MP for Tunbridge Wells said: "There are still gaps in today's announcement, including the refusal to make a clear commitment to an emissions performance standard, which would set a legal limit on the lovel of CO2 pollution that a power plant could emit. We also need to know who will pay the new consumer levy and how much will be added to fuel bills."

Mr Miliband has admitted that customers face a two per cent hike in energy bills.

Village sale is darn fine yarn

A KNITTED model of the village of Mersham, near Ashford, is being put up for sale.

It includes such landmarks as the local primary school, cricket ground and bus shelter as well as some of the residents.

Members of the village afternoon club have spent the last 23 years slowly adding to the model.

On May 16, the village will be put on display so people can come and pick their favourite piece of the model.

Joyce McDonagh, 82, from the club said: "Two of the villagers started it by mocking up the base of the buildings in cardboard. They were then knitted up by the members.

"There are now around 100 pieces. We are going to ask people who gave a donation to it to come and claim a property and anyone else who would want to buy one of the buildings can make a donation to the village hall."

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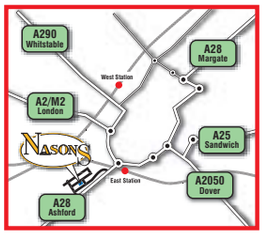

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Who is at fault for sex abuser who cheated legal checks?

CONFUSION surrounds the case of how a known sex offender was able to gain employment at a school, ***writes Jenna Pudelek***.

Student manger Graham Barlow, 56, was fired by Pent Valley Technology College in Folkestone for sending "sexual" text messages to a 15-year-old pupil.

It was discovered that he 'slipped through the net' and had been hired despite having been previously been found guilty of sexually abusing a child under 10 in the 1970s.

Kent Police confirmed a 56-year-old man from Folkestone had been cautioned in March this year for meeting a girl under 16 for sexual grooming in relation to sending a text of a sexual nature.

Vetting

A national tabloid claimed he had applied for the post at the school by changing his name to Graham Poole-Barlow and that background checks failed to pick up his previous conviction.

Police and Kent County Council said the 'vetting' process for people working with children was the responsibility of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).

A spokesman for the CRB told Kent on Sunday: "When someone is applying for a CRB check they are required to provide any former or previous names.

"Then the individual is required to sign a declaration on everything submitted. It is a criminal offence [to lie on a CRB form] and can lead to up to six months in prison. The onus for ensuring that information is correct is on the organisation, so the school in this case. The CRB can only go on the information given to the registered body."

Asked what checks the school carries out to ensure CRB forms are correct and what identification Barlow provided for his CRB form, Pent Valley refused to comment.

Safeguards

KoS asked KCC whether there are potentially more people like Barlow, who have previous convictions, working in Kent schools.

Leyland Ridings, the authority's cabinet member for children, families and educational achievement, said: "Kent schools, like those across the country, follow national guidelines on CRB checks and rely on their findings.

"The new Vetting and Barring Scheme, set up by the Home Office, will be introduced from this autumn with new safeguards that will enhance the protection of children and vulnerable adults. This scheme will apply to all existing staff as well as new employees."

Pent Valley headteacher Mario Citro previously told KoS's sister paper Yourshepway the school had noticed something was not right with the girl and concerns were raised by staff, which led to Barlow's dismissal in March.

Barlow was interviewed and told to hand over his mobile phone while police and social services were called.

Mr Citro said: "The police praised us because without the phone the investigation would not have been a success.

"There was enough information for me to terminate his contract."

A source working at Pent Valley added: "These things happen and obviously that is not a good thing. Maybe the CRB check is not the best way to do it."

Distinctive freckles gave molester away

Sex tourist who abused young girls caught by his own hand

A PAEDOPHILE was captured when police spotted his distinctive pattern of freckles on pictures showing his abuse of a young girl, ***writes Chris Murphy***.

It is the first case of its kind in the UK.

Dean Hardy, from Orpington, went to Thailand and Cambodia on business trips, and then took pictures of himself molesting helpless youngsters under the age of 10.

He then traded the images with other paedophiles over the internet. The 50-year-old molester confessed to police when confronted by the overwhelming evidence.

Hardy admitted two counts of indecent assault of a girl under 14, four counts of taking indecent photos of children and one of possession of such images, when he appeared at Southwark Crown Court on March 19. The case was adjourned for reports to be prepared before a sentencing hearing this week.

He was given six years for the indecent assault, plus six years for taking indecent images of children to be served concurrently.

Hardy was also ordered to be placed on the sex offenders' register for life.

The attacks came to light when officers from the Metropolitan force's Paedophile Unit received a tip about the pictures.

They carried out a raid on the furniture importer's Charterhouse Road home in September, 2007, and seized a computer and two camera memory cards.

On the cards, they discovered 63 images of a man carrying out sexual attacks on girls under 10. Five pictures were on the computer.

These images were then sent to the Centre for Anatomy and Human Identification at Dundee University.

They were able to compare and match the freckles on the hand in one picture to those on Hardy's left hand.

Admission

Prosecutor Peter Zinner told the court all the children depicted in the indecent pictures on the memory card appeared to be from south-east Asia.

Hardy was questioned by detectives, and it was established the photos had been taken in Thailand. Two of the 63 pictures showed girls being touched by an adult hand.

Other shots showed a girl being raped by another man. Hardy admitted taking the pictures.

Mr Zinner explained: "In all of these pictures there is no facial image of Hardy but it was clear there was an adult hand touching a young girl."

He said a forensic anthropologist studied the pictures and concluded it was Hardy's hand.

And he added: "In the Crown's submission he is a sex tourist, to use a colloquial phrase, who travels abroad to commit these types of offences."

Mr Zinner said that this was "the first case of its kind" where a paedophile had been identified from a picture of his hand alone.

Hardy, who imported furniture from the region, had been in the Thailand in December, 2002, and March, 2004.

Mr Zinner said: "These offences were committed in Thailand. Hardy was able to use his economic power in a society where there is abject poverty."

The indecent images of children were between levels one and four. Level five is the most serious.

CAUGHT: Dean Hardy's tell-tale freckles

Alarm on forecourt

A LOUD explosion from a car on the forecourt of the petrol station at the Tesco supermarket in Willesborough, Ashford, sparked panic on Wednesday.

Motorists and staff were alarmed after the engine compartment of a vehicle made a loud band and smoke was seen pouring from it.

Staff reacted quickly and told people to clear the scene, before calling emergency services.

Fortunately, the bang was caused not by a petrol explosion, but by the car's cooling system that had overheated.

Hostages released

A 27-YEAR-OLD man has been arrested after an incident on Wednesday, when two people were held hostage in Minster, Sheppey.

Police officers, including members of the Kent Police Armed Response Unit, spent nearly two hours talking to the man who was holding a man and woman prisoner.

The man surrendered and was arrested for making threats to kill. No-one was hurt.

To see this clip search 'Lydden' @ yourkenttv.co.uk

Re-live action from the European Rallycross Championship on its recent return to Lydden Hill circuit

Art as nature intended

Teacher hopes to inspire pupils with her own work

By **JENNA PUDELEK**

A STRIKING collection of digital prints that fuse the natural world with technology will be exhibited at a school.

The work by art teacher Sarah Miller, who is also a freelance illustrator, is the first she has put on public display since graduating and it combines computer skills with more traditional methods.

"They are all taken from photographic responses to nature," she said. "I look at mainly flowers, but also other plants.

"The prints go through several stages of manipulation. I work on a computer and then with my hands and they are developed further by computer.

"It is a way of bringing the outside in, it is thinking about bringing the exterior into an interior environment using computer technology. There are such intricate patterns, but they are all natural, organic shapes."

Miss Miller, 28, who lives in Tonbridge, is putting the show, Bloom, on at Bradbourne School in Sevenoaks.

She said her teaching job at the school allowed her to work on her own art during the holidays. The exhibition pieces were created during the Christmas and Easter breaks.

Qualification

"I have hand embellished the work using paints and textiles," she said. "I have always had an interest in the natural world, particularly in flowers and fauna.

"This work is something that has developed as my IT skills have developed. I am now the lead for ICT and art skills for west Kent. Through that and teaching, my technology skills have developed and I use them in my own art work."

Miss Miller said it was important for her students to view her own work.

She said: "It gives you some sort of creative authority with them, as artists they have more faith in your own skills when you give them advice. It also shows them life after they have their qualification, how they might get work as an artist.

"One of our old students has recently exhibited and at the moment we have an exhibition related to our school production.

"We always have different things to be inspiring to the students."

Bloom is on show from Monday to May 8. For more information about Miss Miller's work go to www.smiller.co.uk.

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This weeks
Homes and Gardens
starts on page 39

KENT ON SATURDAY KENT ON SUNDAY

MPs are 'losing the plot' with children's care homes report

By JENNA PUDELEK
jenna.pudelek@kosmedia.co.uk

AN INFLUENTIAL group of MPs who want more children taken away from problem families earlier are "losing the plot", according to county's most senior civil servant.

Placing more young children into residential homes is not the answer to failings in the care system, according to Kent County Council chief executive Peter Gilroy.

A highly critical report by the House of Commons' children, schools and families committee called for a "radical overhaul" of the care system, which it said was "catastrophic" for children who have suffered abuse or neglect.

The MPs said: "The committee is concerned the system's poor reputation may contribute to a reluctance to take children into care. Reform must go hand-in-hand with early intervention to reduce the potential for misery in children's lives."

Mr Gilroy, who has 30 years' experience in social care, said he was disappointed by the study, which was published last week.

"It misses the fundamental question, which is a cultural one," he said. "At what point does the State intervene in our lives in a democracy? There are financial and social implications of the simple policy of taking children very early into institutions – it won't work."

Statistics for children in care show they do much worse at school than other pupils, with more than half leaving without qualifications.

Children in care are seven times as likely to be expelled and twice as likely to be cautioned or convicted.

The committee found prospects for care leavers in the UK are much worse than in Germany, Denmark and Norway where care is not seen as a last resort.

PETER GILROY: Disappointed

Mr Gilroy said: "They have looked at residential care in northern Europe and come back believing in interfering early and removing children from families in a more aggressive way. But the outcome would be up to five times the number of children in care."

"It is worth looking back through history. Putting large numbers of children into institutional settings will not help them thrive."

He said the Victorians put "vast numbers" of children into homes. Many were also shipped to Australia.

"If the desire is for children to establish better relationships and cognitive development, residential care does not have a good track record," he said.

"A public policy document that says residential care is a good idea, and the earlier the better, flies in the face of post-war research.

"I have a view that this report in a way has seemed to lose the plot. Public policy in the UK has been that families are still, in the main, the best way of raising children."

Mr Gilroy said he was not against residential care for some children. There are about 60,000 children in care in England today.

He agreed with the report's findings that the care home system did not provide the best outcomes for children and said there were cases in Kent of children going missing and committing crimes.

A high number of children in care have mental health problems, and end up as teenage parents, homeless or in prison, the report found.

"As a country, we always want to go for simplistic solutions to complex problems," Mr Gilroy said.

"There is an interesting dynamic we have never really explored. At opposite ends of the spectrum, we have difficulties with children and with people in their twilight years.

Fundamental

"Why have we not been talking about this culture? We take responsibility away from each other and the State controls everything – that is the debate we should be having.

"We ought to be asking fundamental questions about our education system and culture. Why are we in this position? What has created these problems?"

Mr Gilroy said there were problems in the care system, agreeing with the report's concerns over the quality of foster carers and those working in residential homes.

But much more research into the system was needed before anything was "radically overhauled", he added.

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Pet cats under fire

Three felines suffer at hands of hooligans

By **CHRIS MURPHY**
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

AIRGUN hooligans have shot and wounded three cats across the county.

The RSPCA says it wants help finding the thugs who attack the defenceless animals.

In Ramsgate, Sebastian, a two-year-old domestic short-haired tabby was shot twice in the side in two separate incidents.

It survived and made it back home to Eagle Hill, where its owner Sheena Barrowdale, 37, took it to a vet.

She said: "In the latest incident I felt around the wound and found a lump a little way from the entrance hole. I knew then that he had been shot again.

"I am just sickened by these attacks. It has happened twice now. This latest time cost £135 for the operation at the vet's and it was a bit less the first time.

"This is not cheap, and it is not fair on the cat either. I think the person responsible is either a cat hater with a prize garden, or some yobbo having some so-called fun. But it has to stop – it is causing too much suffering."

In another attack, a two-year-old female Siamese-Burmese cross-breed was shot in the head near its home in Tunbridge Wells.

It also had an airgun pellet buried in its stomach and was lucky to have not been killed.

The owner, who doesn't want to be named, took it to the vet and thought the cat had been run over before the pellet was discovered.

RSPCA Kent Chief Inspector Steve Dockery was sickened by the attacks. He said: "Anyone shooting at cats with an air rifle can face prosecution and we would always take action."

And Kent Police also want information about an attacker who used an airgun to shoot and wound a cat in Allhallows.

Merlin was hit in the chest by the pellet. The pointless attack on the three-year-old happened some time between 1-11am on Sunday, April 5, near to its home in Binney Road.

As a result of the attack, Merlin has lost the feeling in one of its front legs and it may have to be amputated.

PC Taylor said: "This was a mindless act of violence against a defenceless animal and I would encourage anyone who knows about this incident or knows of people using pellet guns in this way to contact Kent Police."

Anyone with information about Merlin can call Medway police on 01634 891005 or CrimeStoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

For the attacks on the other two cats, call the RSPCA on 0300 1234999.

News and sport updated daily online
www.kentnews.co.uk

MIA-OW: Merlin has suffered a shooting to his leg which may need amputating

Heart op survivor treks for charity

BRAVE: James Bennett

WHEN James Bennett couldn't shrug off what he thought was just a nasty bout of flu, he became even more concerned when his eye started swelling.

And his fears were well founded. When he attended casualty at the William Harvey Hospital last June, it was discovered he was suffering a rare heart condition and required an emergency operation.

Now, less than a year on, the 32-year-old from Kennington is preparing to tackle another challenge – walking 100km of the Great Wall of China where he hopes to raise thousands of pounds for charity.

Doctors diagnosed he had a rare condition called endocarditis where a fungus had formed on one of his heart valves. He was transferred to St Thomas' Hospital in London where a team carried out open-heart surgery to repair the valve.

Now the keen walker wants to repay the staff who helped him by doing his most challenging trek yet.

He said: "I received the best possible care at St Thomas' and the William Harvey. The aftercare provided by the cardiac rehabilitation programme in Ashford was superb."

Mr Bennett is aiming to raise £5,000 for the British Heart Foundation. He has been getting fit by walking across the North Downs.

He will walk a 100km section of the Great Wall starting at Mutianyu, near Beijing, and finishing at Simatai.

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Chef Caines backs KoS campaign

By JENNA PUDELEK
jenna.pudelek@kosmedia.co.uk

MICHELIN-starred chef Michael Caines has backed KOS Media's Buy Local Produce campaign.

The celebrity chef and entrepreneur, who owns ABode Canterbury, spoke enthusiastically about the importance of supporting local farmers – especially during the economic downturn.

"It is a hugely important message to spread – buying local produce – so it is brilliant that KOS Media is running this campaign," he told Kent on Sunday.

"It is really important to keep money in the local economy, important in that it supports local farmers, farmers' markets and smaller grocery shops."

The foodforkent.co.uk campaign, which was launched in March, has been encouraging people to choose Kent-sourced products to support the county through the recession and help protect the environment by cutting down on food miles.

Mr Caines, who has two Michelin stars for his Gidleigh Park restaurant in Devon, said: "In the three years ABode Canterbury has been open there has been an acceleration of interest in local, regional food. Kent still is the Garden of England.

"The county has a wonderful selection of fruit trees; a wonderful climate for growing vegetables; great fish and livestock, such as Romney Marsh lamb, venison in the game season, beef and poultry. Right on our doorstep – here is this amazing larder.

CHEERS: Chef Michael Caines is backing KOS Media's Buy Local Produce campaign

"Farmers need our support, buying locally is good for the environment and allows people to reduce their food miles by buying things in season, with less packaging."

The restaurant industry has certainly not escaped the recession, but Mr Caines was positive about the prospects for his business empire, which incorporates four other ABodes, including Glasgow and Manchester.

"Firms that are not offering good quality and value tend to go out of business, which makes the market smaller," he said.

"I believe we can build on our market share if we are offering the right product.

"We are still busy, but very aware that although we seem to still be doing well, we need to work hard to give our customers the quality and value they want."

He agreed the recession would be good for customers because restaurants could no longer be complacent about the service, food and experience they were offering.

ABode Chester is opening this summer and as well as the restaurants, Mr Caines, 40, has also put his name to taverns, including one in Canterbury, café bars and two 'BarMCs'.

But things have not always gone smoothly for the chain of boutique hotels and restaurants and when ABode Canterbury opened in 2006 it was panned by The Observer's food critic Jay Rayner as a "shoddy over-priced little business".

Although Mr Rayner's most recent review of ABode Manchester was glowing – he called the £12 lunch the "bargain of the year" – Mr Caines is unlikely to forget that cutting 2006 critique.

"The pen is very mighty," he said. "Clearly it had an effect. I was very upset that as a team we had let ourselves down.

"But here we are three years on, we still have a very good customer base, contributing to the local economy and our business is stronger than it has ever been. It was a stinging assessment. We had a tough opening, there are no excuses, but it's not easy and I'm sure if he came back he'd see the changes."

Mr Caines, who has two children with his partner Ruth, has reopened the kitchen at his latest project, The Priory Hotel Bath, and this week he returns home to Exeter and Gidleigh. Smartly dressed in a suit rather than chef's whites for our interview on Thursday, he said he was heading to London to dine at Hell's Kitchen.

The ITV 1 reality show sees Michelin-starred chef Marco Pierre White put a group of celebrities through their culinary paces to serve dinner to a full restaurant.

Asked whether his kitchens get as heated as the hot-tempered Mr Pierre White's, he said: "I don't think you get the best out of someone by screaming at them.

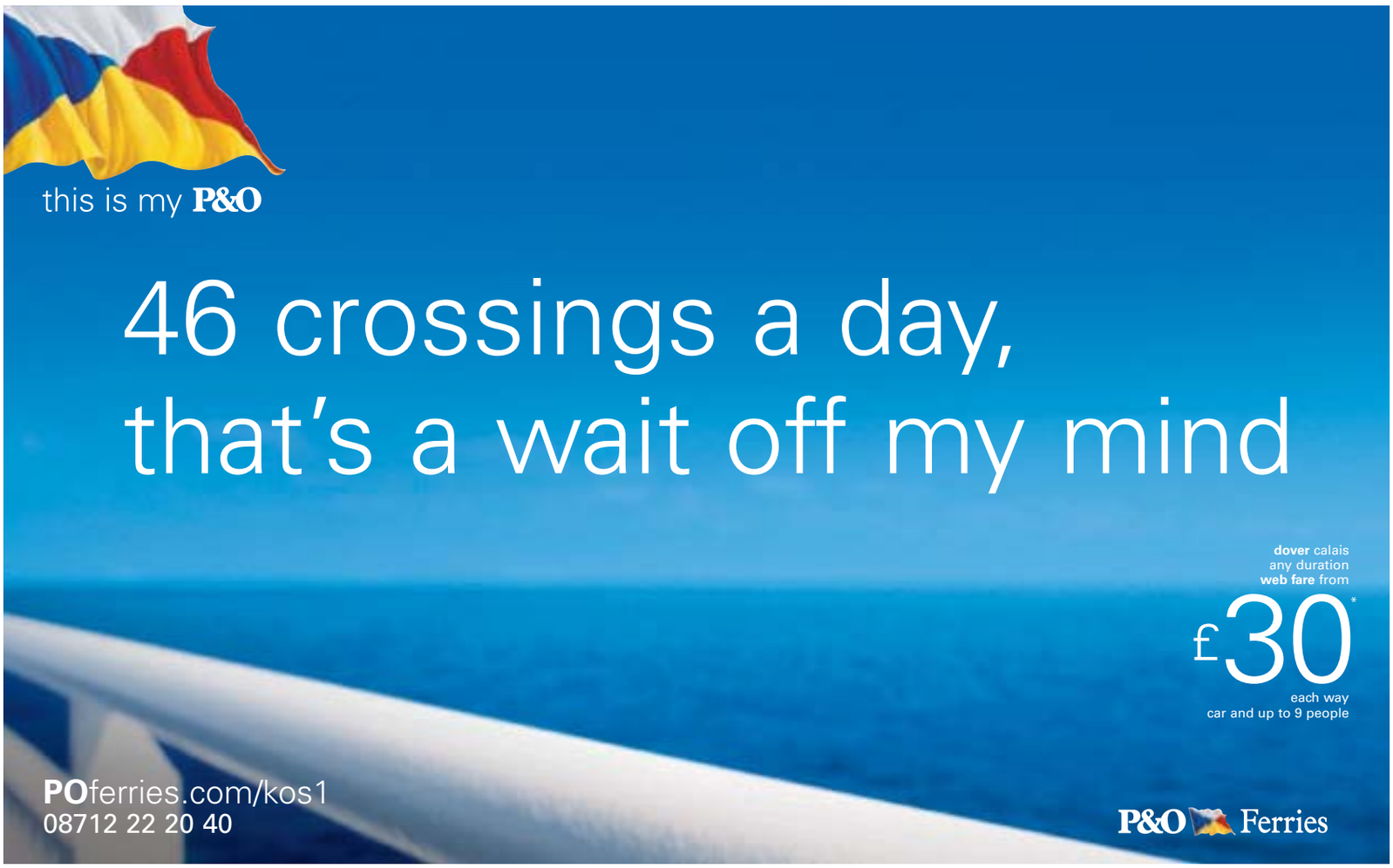
Sensational

"They have to sensationalise it for TV. I have my moments, I do not suffer fools gladly and the expectation is really high.

"Most of the staff have worked with me for a long time they know that my best and worst trait is that I'm very demanding, but that's not a bad thing. I have to protect my reputation and brand."

Mr Caines will be hosting an evening with GH Mumm Champagne on July 13 at Canterbury ABode. Guests will enjoy a champagne reception and a dinner with a menu designed by Mr Caines and head chef Mark Rossi. The event costs £80. For details, call 01227 826 676. For more about KOS Media's Buy Local campaign and to buy the best of Kent produce, go to www.foodforkent.co.uk.

• *See page 53 for more on KOS Media's campaign.*



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BUDGET 2009 **TONY PATEY** measures the business temperature after the

Chancellor fails to tell the

KENT'S leading business organisations have given the thumbs down to Chancellor Alistair Darling's Budget – saying he could have done a lot more for small firms.

The Federation of Small Businesses said it was disappointed its members had been "largely ignored".

But it welcomed action to set up a trade credit insurance scheme – although it reckons the Government should have gone further to tackle late payments to small firms by giving Companies House the necessary clout to name, shame and fine bad payers.

And it has given a "cautious welcome" to the Chancellor's £250 million boost for job programmes and its new scheme to target under-25s.

The organisation echoes haulage firms when it says the 2p rise in fuel duty from September is just another tax at a difficult time – putting pressures on prices to rise for consumers and businesses.

Concern

Roger House, FSB chairman in Kent and Medway, said: "Small firms will also be disappointed not to have received the benefit of automatic rate relief. This will have boosted small businesses to the tune of £400m.

"We are very disappointed this budget will do nothing for those Kent firms which are doing their best to hold on to their valued employees.

"A government-funded wage subsidy for short-time working would have been a real help, but was totally ignored.

"But we welcome the fact that capital allowances for firms investing more than £50,000 will double to 40 per cent."

Malcolm Hyde, CBI South East regional director, said: "The key question for this Budget was whether it set out a credible and rigorous path for restoring the public finances to health. The CBI's preliminary judgment must be that it does not.

"The Chancellor's economic forecasts for next year and beyond look optimistic and given that the UK is heavily reliant on the South East's economy, this has to be a concern.

"By pushing out the horizon for balancing the books as far as 2018, the Government is running too much of a risk."

Frazer Thompson, chairman of the Kent branch of the Institute of Directors said: "While this Budget does reduce the rate of growth of public spending, the scale of the fiscal deterioration in the UK means that extraordinary measures are required.

COMMENT

TONY PATEY

KOS Media's business editor looks at the real message behind Wednesday's Budget… and doesn't like what he sees

BANKS were very quiet after the Budget – I wonder why?

As of Thursday, most newspapers and news organisations seemed to have missed that the dear old banks are going to get a big kick up the backside, as I predicted last weekend.

Mr Darling's characteristic Scottish burr was purring through a particularly wordy patch in his 50-minute speech when he slipped in: "We need to build trust in the banking system and harness the strengths of the financial services sector for the benefit of society.

"Crucial to this is financial regulation. I will shortly publish a Treasury paper with my recommendations for wide-ranging reform. They will propose action to reform corporate governance and remuneration at banks to avoid undue risk-taking.

"To improve regulation of capital and liquidity so banks do not over extend themselves.

"To increase transparency, to achieve a single set of accounting rules so that we can see the risks banks are taking.

"And to regulate all important institutions including hedge funds.

"It will also propose action to reduce the impact of the failure of financial firms; protect and support consumers; improve efficiency and competition in the financial markets; as well as strength regulators' powers."

Well, I think that's a result.

Also, as I predicted, there was a sting in the tail for high-earners' pensions – from April, 2011, pension income tax relief will be restricted to the basic rate for incomes over £150,000.

Had to come after the Goodwin fiasco.

As for the rest of the Budget there were, as usual, lots of snippets, many of them goodies, but not very big.

For example, there's help for the under-25 unemployed, but what about the 26 and 27-year-olds who are finding it extremely difficult at the moment?

Small businesses – the type of firm which make up most of those in Kent – didn't seem to be on the radar, although the digital and green industrial aspects, such as extending broadband to just about every community and the world's first-ever carbon budget, sound great.

But may I end with a quote which again seems to have been overlooked?

Slap bang in the middle of his speech, Mr Darling said: "I am not proposing to increase taxes on income for this year. However, as the economy recovers and wages start to grow again, it is right that we take additional steps."

If that's not a ticking tax increase time bomb, I don't know what is.

• *KOS Media business editor Tony Patey writes an irregular blog at businessforkent.co.uk.*

Budget and warns of an overlooked tax time bomb

long-term story

CASH-STRAPPED: Chancellor Alistair Darling

"The increase in the top rate of income tax to 50 per cent sends out all the wrong signals.

"The increase will affect very few IoD members, but it will have a damaging impact on the wider economy and undermine the UK's attractiveness as a place to invest."

Lawyer Harvey Barrett, partner and head of the private client, trusts and estates team at Kent solicitors Furley Page, said: "Mr Darling gave little detail, but only hinted at government cutbacks, however, when they come they will impact on the funding of long-term care.

"Local authorities are likely to be much more aggressive in exercising their existing powers to force individuals to sell their properties in order to finance their long-term care."

Uplift

In Budget small print it has been found that penalties can now be levied both on individuals and companies for careless or deliberate breaches of tax law.

Stuart Robb, southern region head of tax at accountants Baker Tilly, said: "This is a big step change in HM Revenue and Custom's drive to encourage large companies to recognise and accept their 'corporate responsibility' to pay the right amount of tax.

"It appears to be another unfortunate case of HMRC helping themselves to additional powers, giving rise to the broad and unfair suggestion that companies have nothing better to do than evade taxes."

Steve Carpenter, tax manager at Maidstone-based DSH accountants and business advisors, said: "Once the short-term measures announced today expire, there will be some long-term pain to finance the huge level of debt the country now has."

And Steve O'Neill, managing director of Kent-based Greyfox Estate Agents, said: "We are experiencing a definite uplift in the property market at the moment particularly with first-time buyers home-seeking.

"Keeping the Stamp Duty holiday for homes up to £175,000 until the end of the year is very welcome and may help to further lift the market."

'Short-sighted, wrong and shallow' Darling angers county brewer

A TWO per cent hike in alcohol duty following Alistair Darling's Budget last Wednesday could spell the end for some pubs already struggling in Kent.

So said Jonathan Neame, chief executive of Faversham-based Shepherd Neame, the nation's oldest brewery, as at least another penny went on the price of a pint.

With at least half a dozen pubs closing their doors forever every week, the pub and brewing industry has been lobbying to avert another price rise – and now it's angry.

Mr Neame said: "The trade feels incredibly angry that the Chancellor can be so shallow, short-sighted and wrong."

He added: "One budget and one piece of legislation can never in itself be the killer blow, but the point is that there have been 300 pieces of legislation since 1997 and numerous tax increases, and now this one.

"By putting up the levy he gets less tax – it does not raise revenue because people don't drink so much beer and it distorts the market away from the pubs to the supermarkets.

FURY: Mr Neame

"Pubs become more expensive, pubs then become priced out of the market and pubs close."

He said 41 per cent of the Chancellor's own back-benchers and 70 per cent of consumers thought the general policy was wrong.

However, he thought that while there will be some further pub closures in the county, publicans and the rest of the industry will continue to find ways of fighting back.

Crash pilot on run for drugs charge is found

A PILOT who went on the run after he pleaded guilty to drug charges has been found in Somerset.

Police issued a warrant for Sid Clark, 58, from Barming, after he failed to turn up to his hearing at Maidstone Crown Court in February.

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The court case came after air accident investigators released a report into Clark's plane crash, on February 23 last year, which suggested he may have been on drugs at the time of the incident.

His plane crashed into thick conifer trees bordering a house in Farthing Common, near Hythe.

Clark (pictured) and Tim Des Vignes, 53, a convicted drug smuggler on day release from prison, walked away from the wreckage with only minor cuts and bruises.

Police raided his home several days after the crash where they found 300 cannabis plants and arrested Clark on suspicion of growing cannabis.

A house in Shepton Mallet was raided on April 17, where Clark was found and arrested for failing to appear in court. He has been remanded in custody until his appearance at Maidstone Crown Court on May 8.

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Pfizer's shock tactics in fake medicine war

RAT TRAP: A scene from the controversial advert that sparked complaints

WITH emails for fake drugs a staple of every computer inbox, the company behind male impotence drug Viagra has warned that people are placing themselves in danger by using bogus treatments, ***writes Chris Murphy***.

In a stomach-churning advert, the Sandwich-based maker of Viagra graphically illustrates the dangers of swallowing medicines from unknown sources.

Pfizer has produced a a cinema advert showing a man taking a pill and then coughing up a whole rat.

A voiceover warns that rat poison has been found in fake drugs, along with many other dangerous and potentially lethal substances.

The advert states: "Rat poison. Just one of the dangerous ingredients that may be found in fake medicines purchased from illegal websites. Get real. Get a prescription."

Regurgitated rat cinema ad backed despite complaints

More than 60 people have complained to advertising watchdogs about the commercial, saying it was too disturbing to be screened.

But the Advertising Standards Authority gave it the all clear, saying it carried a valid and important warning.

A Pfizer official said: "The advert, seen by cinema audiences across the UK, highlights the danger of obtaining medicines from unregulated sources.

"Evidence shows there is a risk of these medicines being counterfeit, containing too little, too much or no active ingredient, or worse, toxic substances such as rat poison, boric acid or lead paint."

WARNING: Tony Williams

The company said the ASA adjudication concluded the aim of the advert justified the use of hard-hitting imagery and that it did not cause fear or distress without good reason, and was unlikely to cause serious or widespread offence.

Pfizer launched the campaign in conjunction with the Patients' Association and Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency.

Dr David Gillen of Pfizer, said: "We're really pleased with the adjudication.

"We set out to inform the public about the very real and growing threat from counterfeit medicines. We certainly did not want to offend people, but the dangers of obtaining medicines from unregulated sources are very real and we needed to communicate that message forcefully."

Research has found up to 90 per cent of prescription drugs bought from unregulated sources can be fakes.

Pfizer commissioned research into the scale of the problem and discovered that every year more than 330,000 men in the UK are likely to buy prescription-only medicines from illicit websites.

Dr Gillen said: "Alerting people to this danger is a responsible course of action. We have gone to considerable lengths to try to guide people towards safer sources of prescription medicines and that campaign will continue."

Tony Williams is executive manager of the Yalding-based Kenward Trust, which cares for people battling addiction.

He said: "Fake drugs can be like Russian roulette. If you go into Boots with a prescription, you know what you are going to get.

"But picking something up from the internet or on the street corner, you don't know what you are buying and it could end up killing you.

"We had a case where a man had an arm amputated after he injected a drug that contained cement dust."

The ASA said it did not consider the advert, shown in cinemas with 15-rated movies, would cause "undue fear and distress".

It added: "Because the advert was designed to highlight an important issue, the dangers of which could result in damage to health or fatality, we considered the metaphor of regurgitating a rat was likely to justify, for most people, the approach."

For more information on the dangers of fake drugs, visit www.realdanger.co.uk.

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By MARIJKE COX

Injured but safe, hostage freed from Nigerian hell

AN OIL worker held hostage by militants in Nigeria has been released seven months after being captured.

Robin Hughes from St Margaret's, near Dover, was working on an oil vessel when he was taken hostage along with 26 others by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Nigel Delta (MEND) in September.

The 59-year-old is one of the last to have been released, leaving just one man, Mathew Maguire from Birkenhead, still being held by the militants.

Mr Hughes was released to hospital with a leg infection last weekend and is currently talking to the Nigerian authorities.

His younger brother Mark, who lives in Dover, said in a radio interview he was "overjoyed" to hear of his brother's release.

"At first I thought 'Is it true?'. We thought it would be a long, drawn-out affair. We thought this day wouldn't come and that it might even be bad news."

A picture of Mr Hughes and fellow hostage Mathew Maguire was released in January by the militants, who were refusing to let the Brits go unless Henry Okah, the leader of MEND who is on trial for gun-running and treason, was released.

But the married father-of-one, who lives with his wife and daughter in Brazil, was let go on health and age considerations.

The MP for Dover and Deal, Gwyn Prosser, had been working closely with Mr Hughes' brother Mark and his wife Caroline to secure Mr Hughes' release.

He said: "We've been working together for the past seven months, expressing our concerns. I'm sure that without this pressure we may not have had this good result.

"Mark and Caroline phoned to let me know they had heard from Robin. He has an infected leg, but is in good spirits. It's great news for the Hughes family, but I'm still concerned about Robin's colleague Mathew Maguire. I will try and do what I can to help."

RELEASED: Robin Hughes

Curtain finally falls on unsafe Theatre Royal

WRECKING crews have begun work on partially demolishing the historic Theatre Royal in Chatham.

Contractors were brought in after inspectors deemed the listed building was dangerous and needed to be made safe.

Work started last weekend – much to the dismay of long-time theatre supporters who had campaigned to see the venue restored.

Readers of our sister paper Yourmedway have slammed the decision, saying more should have been done to protect and restore the High Street theatre.

Writing on yourmedway.co.uk Phil Dillon, from Chatham, said: "The loss of the Theatre Royal makes a mockery of the notion of responsible regeneration. A regenerated theatre would have been the jewel in Chatham's crown. That's real lives and memories and cultural history and spirit they are tearing down."

Brian Damerell, from Gillingham, posted: "Is anyone really surprised the Theatre Royal is coming down?

"Those of us with an interest in the renaissance of Chatham 'knew' this would happen as soon as it became an obstruction.

"It could have been demolished a long time ago and parts of the fabric sold to the public. Thank goodness there are photographs of this unique building in the public domain.

"To declare the building unsafe now is awful. Is the bank next door unsafe yet? Will Sun Pier ever float again? Where will it all end?"

The partial demolition is expected to take five weeks to complete.

A Medway Council spokesman said: "In the interests of public safety, the council is closing Manor Road, Chatham. The work should have no impact on the schedule for the Chatham road improvements."

To see this search 'theatre royal' @ yourkenttv.co.uk

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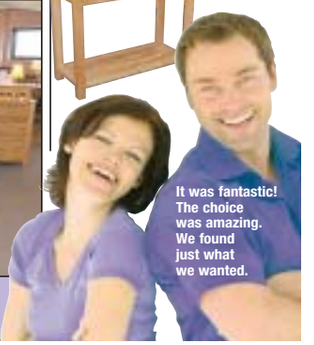

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Brandon 'was in wrong place at the wrong time'

THE family of a boy who died over the Easter break have said their home will "never be the same again", ***writes Tom Betts***.

Nine-year-old Brandon Wells died on Saturday, April 11, at the junction of St Peter's Road and Broadley Road, Margate.

The youngster was in a collision involving two cars and died at the scene. He leaves behind mother and father, Shirene and Michael Wells, and little sister Maddisson and younger brother Reiss.

Now his close relatives have told of their heartbreak at their loss.

His uncle Richard Wells said: "It is completely gut-wrenching. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time. There is no ill-feeling towards the drivers of the cars.

"We would particularly like to pay tribute to the paramedics, who we know did all they could for Brandon. That must be the emergency services' worst-night-mare call."

Auntie Rachelle Wells added: "His house will never be the same again. His brother and sister are so quiet and good – he was the boisterous one, running up and down the stairs, playing rough and tumble. It is now unbelievably quiet. It has changed our world forever. You never expect this to happen to your family."

The youngster is pictured on the left of the photo above with his sister Maddisson, two, and brother Reiss, who is seven.

LOSS: Brandon with his siblings

Maddisson cannot understand why her mum and dad cannot call Brandon on the phone and ask him to come home.

The family have visited the scene of the incident and released nine balloons attached with messages, they also laid flowers, cuddly toys and sweets.

At the funeral held last week a specially-enlarged coffin carried items his family and friends wanted to send him off with, including his PSP game and a sealed envelope with a letter from his girlfriend.

His mother gelled his hair as Brandon was always very particular about how it looked.

The service was conducted by Father David Caine at Our Lady Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Church in Broadstairs.

Kent Police's serious collision investigation unit is appealing for witnesses and anyone with information to come forward. You can phone officers on 01622 798538.

OUT OF THE TRAPS: The film posted on YouTube shows the man, complete with cloth horse head, on the track

Stag turns horse in a night at the dogs

By **EMILY HALL**

THOUSANDS of people have watched a video clip of a man on a stag night put on a horse's head mask and try to join a greyhound race.

The bizarre footage shows the man climb over barriers to join the dogs at the Central Park Stadium in Sittingbourne, while a friend captures the moment for the video-sharing website YouTube.

Stadium staff rush to stop him and can be seen wrestling him to the side of the track.

Some who have seen the video have branded the pair "idiots" and called for the police to track them down.

One woman who saw the recently-posted film said: "The guy who did this is nothing short of an idiot.

"I hope he gets a hefty fine. Also the guy videoing it knew it was going to happen – he should also get one and both be banned from every track."

The minute-long clip shows the man – complete with cloth horse's head – leaping up from his seat, wobbling over towards the track and hurling himself over the safety barriers.

He is then manhandled to the ground by trackside security, before being bundled to the side of the racecourse. Just moments later, six greyhounds speed by.

Bizarre

A stadium spokesman said it was the first time in 12 years that anyone had ever run onto the track during a race.

He added: "We did have someone getting on to the track and I believe the police have been given the information. He was on a stag do, although most of the rest of his group had already left, and he had a horse's head on. I think he must have been a bit worse for wear.

"It's dangerous for the dogs and those who have to come in to help."

But despite pleas from the clip's online viewers, police say they are now powerless to do anything about the pre-wedding stunt.

A Swale police spokeswoman said it was "bizarre".

"We were informed two or three days after the event, we weren't called at the time, which has made it more of a civil matter," she said.

"It appears it was a stag do and the Central Park Stadium contacted us to let us know and to say the footage had since appeared on YouTube.

"I think if we had attended at the time the man could have been arrested for being drunk and disorderly, but because that didn't happen the footage is now not enough to show any crime being committed."

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Canine support goes on trial

By CHRIS MURPHY
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

Police dog finals take place for first time in the county

LEEDS Castle is today hosting the final day of National Police Dog Trials – but because Kent Police's champion developed a medical condition, none of the county's officers made it to the finals.

Rex is an Alsatian that specialises in tracking, searching, chasing and detaining offenders. But the dog developed a problem with its spine and had to be retired from the force.

That put the Kent Police team on a back foot when it came to qualifying for the national finals.

Insp Preston Chalk, head of the dog section based at Coldharbour, said: "We are proud to be hosting such a prestigious national event here in the county.

"While officers from Kent police are not competing in the finals this year, its impressive track record is one of the reasons it was chosen to host the dog trials. We have won six national police dog titles in the past four years.

"But this year, our force champion had to be medically retired a week after the force trials due to a spinal condition, which meant it could not continue to work.

"This significantly affected our chances or qualify for the nationals. It is disappointing, but the welfare of our dogs is a priority."

The four-day 49th national trials event comes to a conclusion today on its first visit to Kent.

The finals are a free public event held at Leeds Castle, near Maidstone.

Spectators can watch handlers and their dogs put their skills to the test in a series of work-related tasks and learn about their vital role in modern policing.

Some 28 finalists from around the country have been taking part to find the best police handler and dog in Britain.

The key events are:

- Obedience: sits, stays, walking to heel off lead
- Send away and redirection: the dog is sent to a given point 100m away and then redirected left or right for 50m
- Agility: nearly 1m hurdle, 1.8m scale, window obstacle and 1.8m jump
- Straight chase: chase a fleeing criminal and bite and detain
- Stand off: as above but criminal gives up and dog must not bite, but must stand off and bark
- Emergency recall: straight chase but when the dog is 30m away in full flight, must return to handler on command
- Weapon attack: dog must bite an advancing aggressive criminal armed with a weapon
- Gun attack: as above, but with criminal discharging gun
- Crowd control: must first walk to heel through a passive/non-threatening crowd then when crowd becomes aggressive – respond and through controlled canine aggression move the crowd to a determined point. The crowd will then become passive and then the dog must walk through with no aggression.

The first two phases of the competition were held in private at an Ashford venue and involved searching and tracking.

The dogs have to identify scent and because of the risk of cross contamination the public are kept away.

The finals will end with a formal parade and presentation for the winning dog teams by Prince Michael of Kent.

To see this clip search 'dog trials' @ yourkenttv.co.uk

Kent Police have been putting their dog teams through their paces before this year's National Dog Trials

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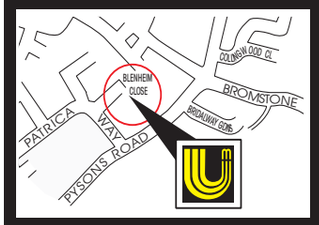

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Archbishop game for a laugh at Merton gig

COMEDIAN Paul Merton can sleep easy in his bed knowing his quick-fire routines have earned him the blessing of a distinguished fan.

Audience members at the comedian's Silent Clowns show last week were shocked to see none other than the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams laughing along to the show about the skills of silent comedy stars.

A surprised audience member said: "I was standing behind him when he gave his ticket to the lady at the door, just like everyone else. I was really surprised to see him there. He seemed to be enjoying the show along with everyone else. I think he went off to meet Paul Merton after the show."

A spokesman for the Archbishop confirmed his attendance of the show, at the Shirley Hall in the grounds of Canterbury's Kings School.

Perfect image for best placed town

IMAGES CONSCIOUS: Council-backed Ashford Future wants pictures that best reflect what the town really means

By **ED HILL**
ed.hill@kosmedia.co.uk

BUDDING photographers have until the end of the week to enter a major competition designed to highlight what Ashford means to them.

Organised by Ashford's Future – the council-backed organisation set up to drive forward the town's ambitious growth plans – the Ashford Best Placed in Britain competition has already attracted a host of quality entries.

The town has long used the Best Placed in Britain tag to promote its road and rail links, as well as increasing housing and business capacity.

Now it hopes it will prove the inspiration for some stunning snaps.

Judith Armitt, from Ashford's Future, said: "The big point about the images is they should reflect the fact Ashford is the 'best placed', but it's not just about the fantastic train services we will have.

"We are looking for that essential ingredient that makes people feel they live in that best town."

Photographers have until Friday to enter the competition. Entries can be uploaded to a website set up by the organisers so people can comment and vote on the pictures.

There are three age categories for people to enter, under-12s, 12-17 and 18 and over.

Five entries will be chosen from each group and printed in a professionally-bound book that will be given to the winners.

The images will be used in new promotional material which will be used by Ashford's Future later this year.

The overall winner will be chosen by the public. Prizes for the entrants include trips on Eurostar, a day spent with a professional photographer and £300 of photographic equipment.

Anyone can enter whether their snap is taken on a mobile phone or the latest digital SLR camera.

The image must consist of a minimum of 1024 x 768 pixels so it can be uploaded to the website www.ashfordbestplaced.co.uk/photo. See the website for more details. The winner will be announced in June.

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BACK: Jack was found in park

Sad tale has a happy ending as family find dead dad's lost dogs

SPOTTED: Ollie was with girl

A FIVE-DAY search for a pair of missing dogs with enormous sentimental value has come to a bizarre end, ***writes Chris Murphy***.

The sister of a man killed in a road accident had offered a cash reward to find his two lost pet dogs.

The pair of long-haired Jack Russell terriers vanished during a walk with the man's daughter.

Pedestrian Michael Pritchard, from Dover, was killed in an accident with a car last November – a court case is still pending.

The accident happened on November 22 in Hythe.

Mr Pritchard's sister Nikki Stokes, 37, from Dover, said: "His two dogs went to live with our parents Maurice and Jean.

"Then, on what would have been Michael's 50th birthday, they went missing and the whole family was left so utterly distraught.

"He was so in love with his pets, so when they vanished during a walk we were all desperate to find them and even issued a reward thinking someone may have taken them."

She said Michael's daughter Lindsay Reid, 26, was walking them when they ran off.

Nikki said: "It is so rare for them to do that. They usually run away and come back, but the final time they didn't come back at all."

The Terriers, Jack, five and Ollie, three, ran off during a walk in the Poulton Wood area of Dover, which is near the Elmsvale recreation ground. It happened at around lunchtime on April 15.

But the tale has a happy ending.

Nikki said: "A family friend spotted one of them on a local recreation field and we were able to go down and pick him up

"But on the way, I spotted a young girl with some dogs and one looked just like Ollie. We stopped the car and she told us she had spotted him walking around and looked lost.

"So we recovered both dogs within minutes of each other. I simply can't tell you how happy we are – it is such a relief.

"Jack was covered in chalk and appeared a little distressed, but Ollie was just fine. We are so very pleased."

News and sport updated daily online
www.kentnews.co.uk

Ferry firm trials back-up route in case of blockade

BOSSES at P&O Ferries have secured a back-up route to Belgium in case of further strike action in France.

The move comes after the company lost £2 million last week when French fishermen blockaded the ports of Calais, Boulogne and Dunkirk in a dispute over EU fishing quotas, leading to crossings being cancelled.

The Pride of Dover was taken for berthing trials in Ostend on Thursday, to see if there was a possibility of another route to the Continent when Calais is out of bounds.

A spokeswoman at P&O said industrial action across the Channel was common enough to warrant a back-up route to Belgium, which could help save millions of pounds lost when ships were unable to sail.

Frustrated

The move by P&O follows action by Kent County Council, whose officials launched a campaign called Enough is Enough to try to put a stop to the chaos caused by the French strikes.

During the two-day blockades Operation Stack was implemented, causing congestion on the county's roads as police parked lorries on the M20 diverting traffic on to A-roads.

KCC is now putting pressure on the Government to claim compensation from the French Government for the millions the strike has lost Kent and the UK economy.

P&O Ferries, which was affected badly by the strike, has welcomed the initiative, as has the newest operator to Dover, LD Lines, which runs routes to Dieppe and Boulogne.

The spokesman added: "We are greatly concerned about how the services are being affected. We'd support any action being called for and we are very frustrated that we can't provide advertised services."

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Miner move for statue

A GRANT of £300 has been recommended by Sandwich councillors as a contribution to the Move The Miner Campaign.

The statue of the miner (pictured) is on the seafront at Dover, but campaigners want it moved to the entrance of Fowlmead Park on the A258, between Sandwich and Deal.

The move has the backing of Dover District Council and is due to take place later this year. This would place it on a heritage trail which campaigners feel highlights the contribution the coal-mining communities made to the county. Gary Cox, chairman of the Move The Miner group, said: "The statue was commissioned to thank the Kent miners. It was put on Dover seafront, next to the National Coal Board offices, in 1997.

"Now it's going to be put next to the Miner's Way Trail."

The statue was originally set up at Richborough power station in 1966 and donated to Dover council when the electricity board closed the power plant down.

The staue was then placed next to the NCB offices, which have also since closed.

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Soprano unfazed by the switch from Beijing to Bohème

By **JENNA PUDELEK**
jenna.pudelek@kosmedia.co.uk

AN EXCITING new operatic talent from China will take up the lead role in a Kent company's production of Puccini's La Bohème.

Ge Yu, who is from Beijing, has been rehearsing the part of Mimi in one of the most famously melodious and popular of all operas, which opens at the Churchill Theatre in Bromley on May 27.

She said: "Before I auditioned I did not think I could do everything, do this role in this opera. But now I feel they are so clever to have picked me.

"My voice is kind of different from everybody else. It is special."

La Bohème captures the spirit and excitement of 1830 Paris, with the star-crossed love affair of Mimi and Rodolfo contrasting the carefree attitude of youth with the harsh reality of life.

CONFIDENT: Ge Yu says opera says being cast in the lead role of Mimi in Puccini's Bohéme was a 'clever' move by Kentish Opera

Favourite

Soprano Ms Ge, 34, said it was one of her favourite operas and Kentish Opera, a charity that puts on performances in Bromley, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge, was full of praise for its "talented" new star.

Asked whether opera is popular in China, she said: "It's something different, generally I feel much easier with England, with opera in this country.

"I think it is because it is a European art form. It is because you know, opera is known much more here than to us in China."

The production is Ms Ge's first operatic role in this country.

She said: "It is going very well and I'm really enjoying it over here.

"I am not nervous, I really enjoy it."

She said that she would like to bring together performers from England and China to work on a joint opera project in the future.

After she graduated from the China Conservatoire in Beijing, Ms Ge went on to study at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow.

She has performed in the Beijing Concert Hall and given recitals in Italy and Scotland.

The production of La Bohème will be sung in English and includes soloists from the English National Opera, Welsh National Opera together with the Kentish Opera Orchestra and Chorus.

It is set in the bare attic home of a group of Parisian bohemians and the streets and cafés where the artists and writers socialise. But the happiness and youthful love is short-lived when Mimi is struck down by an illness.

Sally Langford, the production's director, said that Mimi and Rodolfo were two of the most popular characters in opera history.

"Rehearsals are going extremely well and Ge Yu is something special and very talented," she added.

• ***La Bohème will run at the Churchill Theatre Bromley from May 27-30. For tickets ring 0870 060 6620 or visit www.ambassadortickets.com/bromley. Prices range from £18 to £26. For more about Kentish Opera visit www.kentishopera.fsnet.co.uk.***

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Book your appointment

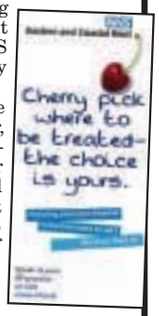
Libraries join online NHS scheme offering patients the chance to pick where they want to be treated

By CHRIS MURPHY
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

SINCE it became possible to book hospital appointments from your computer, many people have been unable to take advantage of the system as they don't have a PC.

But now local libraries are making theirs available for patients – and it's all for free.

It's called the Choose and Book system, and it gives people the option of selecting the hospital where they want to be treated and booking their first outpatient appointment via the NHS Choices website, or by phone.



Jon Marshall, Choose and Book support officer, said: "Kent libraries' computers are free to use for library members and enable people who do not have internet access to look at the wide range of hospitals and compare them on the criteria that matters most.

"People are often not aware that they can now, in many cases, receive treatment at any NHS- funded hospital anywhere in England, including many private and independent sector hospitals.

"Someone can select a hospital more convenient for other members of the family if they live some distance away, or they could even select one on the strength of how long they will wait for an appointment."

The benefits of Choose and Book are threefold. Users can choose any hospital in England, plus pick a convenient date and time for the appointment and also be assured their information will not get lost in the post.

Popular

Each library will be receiving an information pack with frequently asked questions and answers to assist with any queries users may have.

Tricia Fincher, service development librarian for health and older people, said: "Free internet access is extremely popular with library users of all age groups and we've recently upgraded computer equipment in all of our libraries.

"This is another way library members can make the most of the facilities we offer."

And Health Matters reference group member Jean Spain said the involvement of the libraries with Choose and Book was an excellent idea.

She said: "This is going to be of particular use to older people who may want to select a more convenient hospital near to their families.

"They will be able to take their time to get exactly what they want and when they want via the internet."

Meanwhile, the actual PCs at Kent libraries will be getting a major upgrade to speed them up.

All 101 libraries across Kent, plus the county's mobile libraries, will be transferred to a new system that will include bigger 19ins screens and better printers.

The decision was made after customers complained many were simply too slow.

Main district libraries went live with the new machines on April 15 and most other libraries will be transferred by 27 April.

There is also a new function notifying customers of books that might interest them and allowing customers to add reviews about books, films and music.

The new equipment will save £1 million a year in running costs, said the service, as well as reduce its carbon footprint.

FREE SERVICE: The Choose and Book system will be availabled in the county's 101 libraries

'We honestly didn't know about the extent of autism'

A NEW drive to raise awareness about autism and improve services for people with the lifelong condition has been launched.

Families, carers, health workers, academics and other experts were asked to talk about their experiences of autism in adults as part of a six-month study by Kent County Council.

By **JENNA PUDELEK**
jenna.pudelek@kosmedia.co.uk

Cllr John Simmonds, who chaired the authority's autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) select committee, said: "We honestly did not know the extent of the problem and how people were dealing with it.

"We are now reasonably good at identifying autism in children. At a conference, which the National Autistic Society held, we met up with quite a few carers.

"There is now a generation who saw it as their duty to look after their children and are now getting into their 60s and 70s and are no longer able to care for them.

"They have never actually asked for much help from their local authority."

ASD is a lifelong developmental disability. Although all people with autism share three main areas of difficulty, their condition affects them in different ways.

The three areas of difficulty are with social communication, social interaction and social imagination.

People with autism often have difficulty recognising or understanding other people's emotions and feelings, and expressing their own.

They can find it hard to understand, predict and interpret other people's behaviour and make sense of abstract ideas.

The committee of eight county councillors also found a high proportion of the people who get in trouble with the police have autism.

Cllr Simmonds said: "It can be a contributing factor that the police do not understand the difficulties that the individual faces."

Among the committee's 15 recommendations is one to train KCC's staff so they understand the condition and its effects.

There is also a suggestion to run an awareness campaign in the community and also among police and those working in the criminal justice system.

LEARNING CURVE: Kent County Council's study gave a better indication of the extent of autism throughout Kent and how it is effecting people with the condition and their carers

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Anger lands man with community order after crash

A MAN threatened to "torch" the house of a driver who had crashed his Land Rover into his girlfriend's car.

Terry Roke, 29, of James Street, Sheerness, went to the driver's house after his girlfriend incurred a £500 excess on her insurance.

When he refused to pay up Roke told the hapless driver he was a "dead man" and threatened to beat up his wife and set fire to his house.

David Applin, prosecuting at Sittingbourne Magistrates Court, said Roke kicked in the man's front door making threats as he went.

But Roke's actions resulted in a visit from the police and they found skunk, cannabis and amphetamines in his house.

Jeff Playford, defending, said his client went "way over the top" in his actions.

Roke was given a 12-month community supervision order and banned from Marine Parade, Sheerness, for the next two years.

The MYTHS and the REALITIES

MYTH: Autism (including Asperger syndrome) is a rare condition
REALITY: Autism is no longer seen as a rare condition and is thought to affect more than 500,000 people in the UK today

MYTH: Autism is a new phenomenon
REALITY: The first detailed description of a child we now know had autism was written in 1799 by Jean Itard in his account of the wild boy of Aveyron.

MYTH: Autism is the result of emotional deprivation or emotional stress
REALITY: Autism is a complex developmental disability involving a biological or organic defect in the functioning of the brain

MYTH: Autism is due to parental rejection or cold, unemotional parents
REALITY: Autism has nothing to do with the way parents bring up their children

MYTH: A person with autism cannot be educated
REALITY: With the right structured support within and outside school, children with autism can be helped to reach their full potential

MYTH: People with autism wish to avoid social contact
REALITY: People with autism are often keen to make friends but, because of their disability, find this difficult

MYTH: People with autism look different from other people
REALITY: Autism is an invisible disability – most people with an autism spectrum disorder look just like anyone else who does not have this condition

MYTH: Autism is a childhood condition
REALITY: Autism is a lifelong developmental disability with no cure. Children with autism grow up to be adults with autism

MYTH: People with autism have an extraordinary ability like the Dustin Hoffman character in the film Rain Man
REALITY: People with autism who have an extraordinary talent are referred to as 'autistic savants'. Savants are rare: between two and three per cent of the UK population have some form of learning disability, but only 0.06 per cent of these were initially estimated to have an exceptional specific ability. Savant ability is more frequently associated with those who have some form of autism than with other disabilities. Current thinking holds that at most, one or two in 200 people with an autism spectrum disorder might have a genuine savant talent. However, there is no reliable frequency estimate as yet as there is still no register of people with autism in the UK.

Cllr Simmonds said: "There are so many myths about autism.

"Part of what needs to be done is getting messages out there to raise awareness so that everyone, especially those who have dealings with sufferers, can understand autism better."

Specialists

He said the study's findings coincided with new government initiatives, including the introduction of autism specialists.

"There will be funding available with that and ideally if we can show we have got some good policies and solutions then maybe we could run a pilot scheme with some Government help," he said.

Some money to implement the recommendations will also be available from KCC, but the amount has not yet been decided.

Cllr Simmonds said the NHS in the county, including mental health services, was in agreement with the proposals.

Dr Sameena Shakoor, consultant paediatrician at NHS West Kent, said: "The needs of children and adults on the autistic spectrum can only be met properly by collaborative working between health, social services, education and voluntary agencies, and ensuring good proactive planning takes place in the transition from children's to adult services."

Around one person in 100 is affected by ASD although a recent study by the Autism Research Centre at Cambridge University suggests it could be as many as one in 58.

KCC's study found more work is needed to establish how many adults are living in Kent with autism and not receiving support. It suggests more work is needed to improve further education options, employment opportunities and housing.

Cllr Leyland Ridings, the authority's cabinet member for children, said: "Looking after children with autism means giving them the right preparation to live as adults, as well as getting support they and their families need.

"The earlier we can identify and take preventative and correct action the better."

More than 32 people gave evidence to the committee between July and October last year. The report will be presented to the full county council on April 30.

News and sport updated daily online
www.kentnews.co.uk

Fall onto live railway line kills teenager

A TEENAGER has been killed on the railway line at Westgate-on-Sea in Thanet.

The 17-year-old boy fell on to a live rail and was electrocuted at about 11.40pm on Friday, April 17.

Despite efforts to save him, he died at the QEQM Hospital in Margate shortly after being taken there by ambulance.

The boy's name has not yet been released, although his family have been notified.

A British Transport Police spokesman has reminded members of the public not to cross live lines and tracks, calling the incident a "tragic accident".

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More top bands added to Hop Farm Festival's summer weekend of quality rock

ROCK SOLID: From left, British Sea Power, The View and Ash have been added to the Hop Farm Festival line-up, which also includes The Fratellis, Doves and Super Furry Animals

Farm fresh crop of acts

THREE more top bands have been added to the list for this year's Hop Farm Festival, ***writes Chris Murphy***.

Organisers have announced that Ash, The View and British Sea Power will also be on stage for two days of quality pop and rock at the Paddock Wood open-air event this summer.

Acts already booked include The Fratellis, Pigeon Detectives, Echo And The Bunnymen, Paul Weller, Editors, Doves, Super Furry Animals, Ladyhawke, and That Petrol Emotion.

Also appearing are Irish rising stars Bell X1, Brummie indie trio Johnny Foreigner, The Chapman Family, and Eight Legs.

Off-stage activities during the festival on Saturday and Sunday, July 4 and 5, will include a five-a-side celebrity football tournament, a funfair and campsite entertainment.

Organisers are promising festival-goers a unique experience, free of ticket registration, with no VIP areas, no branding and no sponsorship, plus weekend camping, quality food and traditional ales, and leading artists playing across three stages.

A spokesman said: "It's a festival for festival-goers, returning live music to its roots, where music-lovers turn up and enjoy the same experience as every other ticket holder."

KICKING OFF: Ex Jam man Paul Weller

The organisers claim the £125 weekend ticket, which includes camping and parking makes, this one of the cheapest festivals this year. Day tickets cost £65. Visit www.hopfarmfestival.com for details. For tickets, click on www.seetickets.com.

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HIGH AND MIGHTY: Ladyhawke will perform at this year's Hop Farm Festival

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THIS wildlife shot was taken by Dave Hutton of Charing.

He said: "Despite attempts to persuade the robin to build her nest elsewhere, she insisted on building it a few inches off the ground in one of our horse's stables."

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New huge depot proposal for road-rail freight traffic

A HUGE road-rail freight depot, bigger than the proposed Kent International Gateway site, could be built in Borough Green.

Cemex UK and Borough Green Sandpits have been unveiled as the masterminds behind the plans for a 259-acre industrial site.

The new depot has been suggested as an alternative to the 250-acre KIG site near Bearsted, which is being strongly opposed by community leaders and residents.

If approved, the Borough Green depot would run between the M26 motorway and the West Malling to London railway line.

The two developers, who between them own most of the land affected by the proposal, have submitted early plans for the giant depot to Tonbridge and Malling council.

They are planning to attend the public inquiry into the KIG depot bid, which Tonbridge and Malling council officers are also seeking to attend.

A Tonbridge and Malling council spokeswoman said: "The site at Borough Green extends to approximately 100 hectares of land located within the Metropolitan Green Belt, where 'very special circumstances' must be proven in order to justify development.

"Such a proposal would clearly have major planning, environmental and transport implications for the local area and further afield in Tonbridge and Malling."

Colin Wilkins of Savills, a representative for the landowners, said: "The location offers excellent road links to the M20, M25 and M26, as well as access to the mainline railway network

"The project has the potential to take a significant number of lorries off Kent's roads by integrating the South East's motorways with the rail network."

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'Polytunnel growth must be controlled to protect county'

UNDER COVER: Polytunnels like this one are an increasingly common feature of the Kentish landscape – leading to protests from campaigners

GREEN campaigners have called for tighter restrictions on the use of polytunnels over fears they are taking over the Kent countryside.

By **STEVE KNIGHT**
steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

Polytunnels – low plastic tunnels that help fruit production in the same way greenhouses do – are unpopular with many who think they are an unattractive addition to the landscape.

Hugh Lowe Farms at Mereworth, near Maidstone, rotates its use of the structures over 1,300 acres, with 430 acres covered at any one time. The company has submitted a planning application to Tonbridge and Malling council to regulate their use, which has prompted objections from environmental groups.

Simon Evans, a member of the Tonbridge and Malling branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), said Kent County Council needed to clamp down on polytunnels.

"KCC has a structure plan that talks generally about development in the countryside, but there is nothing specific about polytunnels when there ought to be," he said.

"There is no limit for what farmers can apply for, and there is nothing local authorities can put in front of them to say no. It's turned into a bit of a free-for-all, and what happens here could have a bearing across the county."

Of the 430 acres Hugh Lowe Farms covers with polytunnels, the company has also submitted an application for about 40 per cent to be permanently in place.

Mr Evans said the CPRE was not opposed to the structures as a rule, but that such a proposal was a step too far.

He said: "No-one likes the look of them and they could be placed close to people's houses.

"They're noisy because they flap in the wind, they're ugly and light glares off them.

"There's also a massive escape of litter due to plastic that decomposes into the ground and is then torn. I don't think any other industry would be able to get away with creating so much waste."

Objections to the application – which is not expected to be decided upon before summer – have also been filed by the Environment Agency and Kent Wildlife Trust.

Lib Dem group leader Cllr Trudy Dean called on KCC to produce planning guidelines for polytunnels.

Waste

She said: "We must have guidelines about how many polytunnels are acceptable within the landscape, how they should be screened, who gets rid of the waste and whether permanent polytunnels using grow-bags on tables need to be in the countryside at all."

Hugh Lowe Farms is a family-owned company that has been in business for more than 100 years.

It supplies fruit to supermarket chains and is also responsible for the strawberries enjoyed by tennis fans at Wimbledon.

Owner Marion Regan said: "This planning application is to recognise what we are already doing at the farm. It's unclear whether or not we need permission for the polytunnels, but we have taken it upon ourselves to apply.

"We have been in Kent a long time and want to remain here as long as possible. A very small amount of the fruit Britons consume is actually produced in this country.

"Polytunnels are essential for growing soft fruit in the UK and an integral part of our production system."

KCC's cabinet member for regeneration, Cllr Kevin Lynes, said: "We care passionately about defending our rural and agricultural heritage, which we maintain through our close links with the Kent Rural Board.

"Particularly in times of economic downturn, we are keen to encourage the use of new agricultural technology and practices.

"The determination of this application falls to Tonbridge and Malling council as the local planning authority, but we would be happy to share any information or research with them to enable them to come to a decision."

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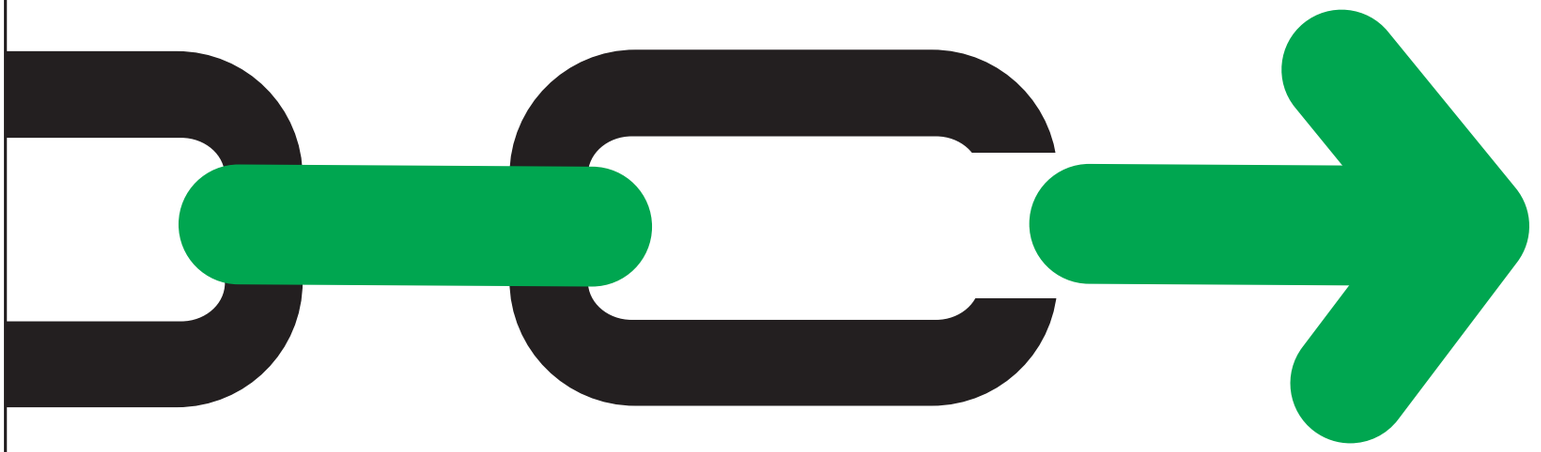

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Carriages a big draw for museum

A UNIQUE collection of carriages at a museum is set to return to public display, ***writes Jenna Pudelek***.

From the magnificent to the mundane, horse-drawn vehicles and other historic modes of transport can be seen at the Maidstone Carriage Museum.

Giles Guthrie, keeper of the collection, said: "The carriages at the museum were a gift from Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake who was 12 times mayor of Maidstone. He began collecting carriages when he realised the horse-drawn vehicles of his childhood were being forced off the road by the motor car. The museum was the first of its kind in Britain and is still viewed as one of the finest in Europe."

LEFT TO RIGHT: Queens Victoria's Fifth State Landau; the first-ever Lonsdale wagonette; an invalid carriage made to look like a carriage

He said one of the highlights of the museum, which opened in 1946, was a 19th century travelling coach with a poignant story attached to it.

The carriage was built for John Stuart, the 12th Earl of Moray and was made in 1830.

Mr Guthrie said: "The coach was intended for his honeymoon after his marriage to the daughter of the Earl of Elgin.

"Six white horses were bought to draw it on their 'grand tour' of Europe.

"But the wedding didn't take place and the heartbroken Earl was said to have had the horses shot and ordered the coach to be wheeled into the coach house and never used again."

Designers

It did not leave the coach house until 1951, when it was moved to the museum.

The carriage is complete with the original case, which would have gone on the top and been used to store the couple's belongings on their tour, which was a tradition among the upper classes and saw young people of privilege travel around Europe experiencing sights of historic and general interest.

The carriage also contains the original sword box which could be accessed from inside the vehicle.

Mr Guthrie said: "The bolt heads are still on the tyres, suggesting the coach was never used."

He said there were a number of other interesting carriages in the collection, including a Lonsdale wagonette, which is the first one of its kind ever made and dates from the 19th century.

"It is named after its aristocratic 'designer' the Marquis of Lonsdale. Another is the Stanhope gig, which is named after the Honourable Fitzroy Stanhope.

"The one in the collection belonged to Sir Garrard, the founder of the museum," he said.

"Aristocrats would commission carriages and the carriage designers would be happy to do that because they were the celebrities on the day. It would have been like getting a David Beckham endorsement."

The museum is also home to a late 19th century 'invalid carriage', which looks like a normal carriage, but which would have been pulled along by servants rather than a horse.

There are more than 60 vehicles in the collection, which is housed in stables dating from the 14th century and are part of the medieval Archbishop's Palace in the County Town.

Other carriages include Queen Victoria's State Landau. Landaus were invented in Germany in the 18th century and were first produced in England during the 1830s.

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Archaeological find challenges town's look in medieval times

A SECOND historic wall has been unearthed on a building site near Restoration House in Rochester.

The wall was discovered by archaeologists underneath the Century Buildings development site, off Victoria Street.

It is thought the structure – which predates the Tudor wall partially destroyed by developers on a site bordering Restoration House – could date back more than 500 years.

Leading archaeologist Dr Peter Rumley, who advises the National Trust, said the wall challenges ideas of how Rochester looked in medieval times.

He said: "This is a very exciting find. Medway Council and Kent County Council should carry out a thorough investigation, so the historic importance of the new discoveries can be properly assessed. This is not just a boundary wall. It's massive and looks as if it could be a defensive structure beyond the old city wall."

Dr Rumley said he thought the two walls – while constructed hundreds of years apart – could have served a similar purpose.

Speaking to our sister paper Yourmedway in March, Restoration House's owners Jonathan Wilmot and Robert Tucker hit out at developers Future Homes, saying the firm should have taken steps to protect the wall.

They said: "You would have thought it essential English Heritage be brought in."

The pair said a petition calling for restoration of the wall and the destruction of the new residential buildings that obscure its view had been backed by 9,000 people.

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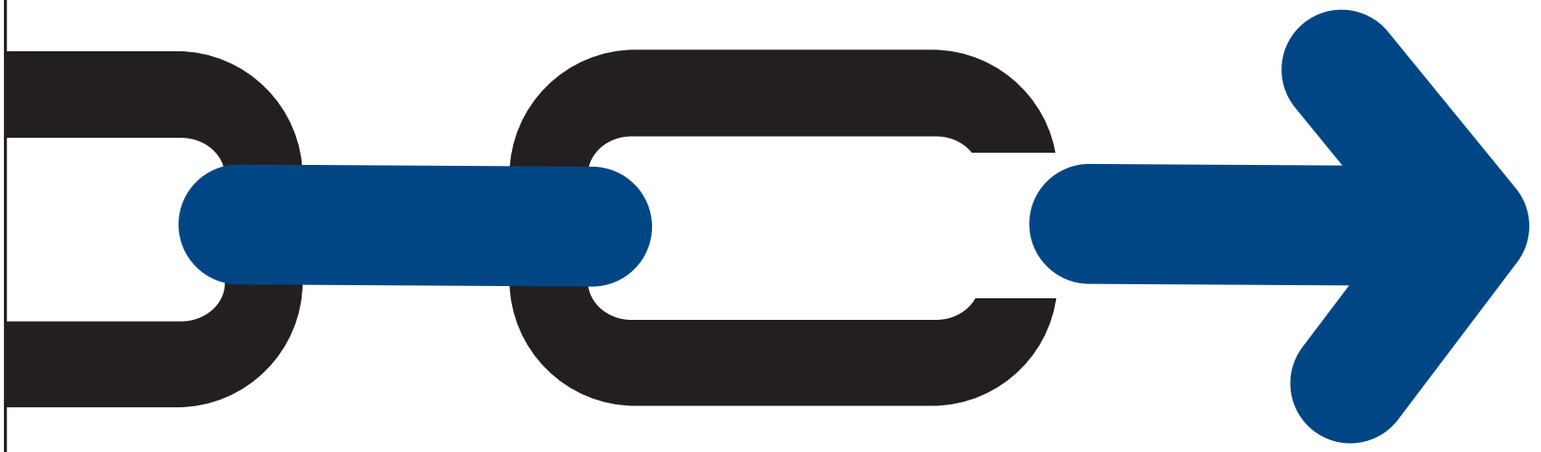

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To enter, simply answer the question below and send your entry on a postcard along with your email address (if applicable), name, address, and daytime phone number to the Guest Photographer Competition, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford TN25 6SR. The closing date is May 15, 2009.

Question: What does the bride traditionally throw after the wedding?
a) a tantrum b) a bouquet
c) her husband

For more details about the Guest Photographer call 01622 744003 or visit www.theguestphotographer.co.uk.

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Lecturer's Olympic recognition

A UNIVERSITY lecturer was in Switzerland last week to become the first person to collect a prestigious new award.

Dr Dikaia Chatziefstathiou is senior lecturer in sociology of sport and leisure at Canterbury Christ Church.

She was awarded the first Pierre de Coubertin Prize for her world-leading Olympic research at a ceremony at the International Olympic Committee headquarters in Vidy.

She had researched the writings of the founder of the modern Olympics, Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

It revealed new aspects about his ideas in relation to gender, class and race, but also how he used political and diplomatic skills to safeguard the future of the Games.

During the work, she analysed more than 300 of Coubertin's documents since the early years of his involvement with sport and physical activity until he died in 1937.

She said: "It feels really rewarding that my efforts have been recognised at this international level and it is an even greater honour that this award comes from the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee and the International Olympic Committee."

She added: "I could not think of a better way of being recognised and honoured for my research."

Dr Chatziefstathiou conducted her research within the university's department of sport science, tourism and leisure, and centre for sport, physical education and activity research.

She said the work is important for global academic literature because for the first time there has been an investigation of the changes the Games' ideology has undergone over the last 100 years.

Police welcome fall in county's crime figures

By **CHRIS MURPHY**
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

OUR county is a safer place to live according to Kent Police, who report a reduction in overall crime – but it's not all good news.

The latest Home Office quarterly figures for the county cover the period from October to December last year.

They show all recorded crime dropped by 5.5 per cent to 29,122 crimes. At the same time, the detection rate has risen by 5.3 per cent.

Other key figures include criminal damage down by 15.2 per cent from 7,707 to 6,539 crimes – a drop of 1,168 crimes.

And the number of recorded violent crimes is down 4.8 per cent, from 6,558 to 6,243. Serious violent crime was recorded as 223 offences, with a 35.9 per cent detection rate.

However, the number of drug offences increased by 22.4 per cent, or 198 more offences; and fraud and forgery rose by 9.6 per cent, which is an increase of 105 cases on previous statistics.

Many of these were for driving away from filling stations without paying for fuel.

Other offences are up by 15.7 per cent from 331 to 383, an additional 52 crimes.

These include public disorder, drunk and disorderly behaviour, immigration offences, violent disorder, and possession of firearms.

Public order offences rose by 14.9 per cent in this category, by 26 offences to 201.

The rise in public order offences is largely due to an increase in the number of arrests made after breaches of civil orders.

These may be related to domestic incidents. For example, a civil order may be taken out against a family member to ensure contact is not made with a child or with a former partner.

Assistant Chief Constable Gary Beautridge said: "We are pleased to see crime is still reducing in the county, but we will not become complacent.

"We will continue working to reduce crime even further. There is a lot of emphasis on neighbourhood policing in our county and our officers continue to work closely with communities to tackle the issues of most concern.

"The rise in recorded drug offences is testament to our ongoing work to disrupt drug networks by targeting organised gangs. There is also significant work in raising awareness and offering support through treatment programmes and counselling.

"We will not tolerate the supply of drugs within the county and will continue to target these criminals."

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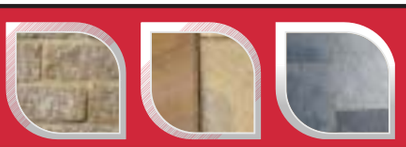

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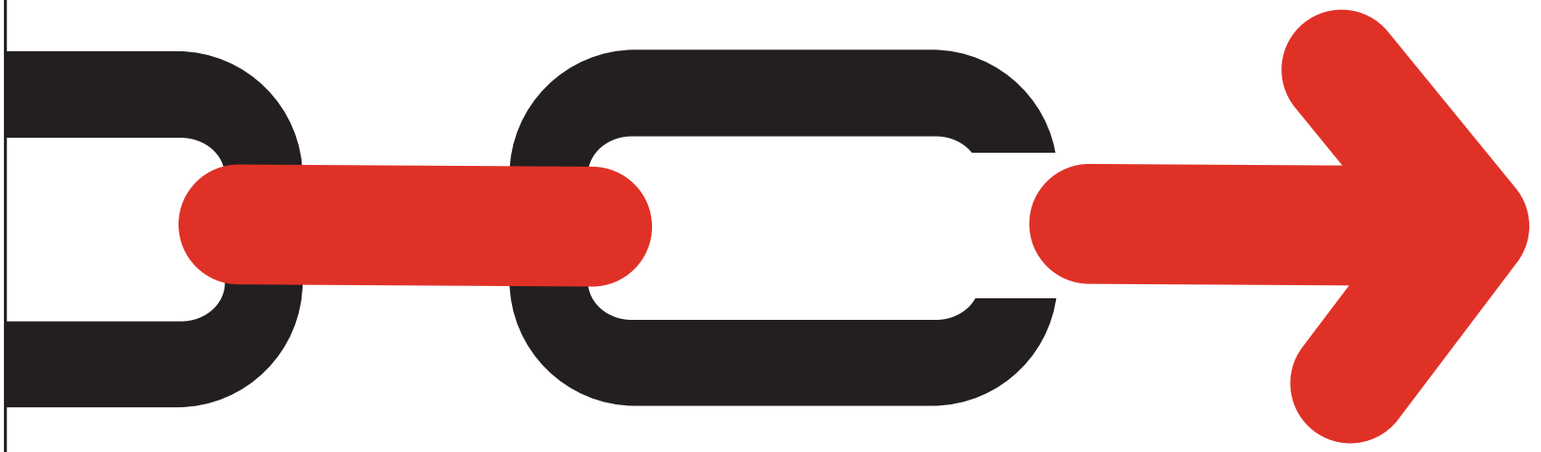

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Real cloud pleasers back at Biggin Hill

By **CHRIS MURPHY**

ONCE more the skies over Biggin Hill will be alive with the sounds and sights of a bygone age as the International Air Fair reaches for the sky.

Thousands of air show fans will be arriving over the two days at the end of June to enjoy displays, including one from the Red Arrows which has only just been confirmed.

This year, the fair will mark 100 years of naval aviation.

Organisers have secured appearances by some of the Royal Navy's most famous planes for both display in the air, and on the ground in the static park.

They include a Hawker Nimrod of the 1930s, Fairey Swordfish and Supermarine Seafire from the World War Two era and a Hawker Sea Hawk, a frontline jet fighter of the 1950s and 60s.

Massive

The battle-winning Sea Harrier was in service with the Fleet Air Arm for 27 years. This year is the 40th anniversary of Harrier operations and the GR9 version will take to the skies over the Biggin Hill.

The Fairey Swordfish Mk 2 attending the fair is one of only a small number of these outstanding aircraft still remaining. It is now operated by the RN Historic Flight.

Known affectionately as the 'Stringbag' because of its fabric, wood and wire construction, the massive biplane, powered by a Bristol Pegasus 9-cylinder radial engine, was flown by Fleet Air Arm aircrews in several important engagements of World War Two.

It was responsible for a dangerous night strike in November, 1940. Headed by 21 torpedo-carrying Swordfish, they attacked the Italian fleet in Taranto harbour – an episode that became a blueprint for a similar strike by the Japanese on the US fleet in Pearl Harbour.

Another was the famous chase in May, 1941, of the German battleship Bismarck in appalling weather conditions of the North Atlantic, when a torpedo launched by a Swordfish crippled the steering gear of the huge warship and the Home Fleet was able to finish her off with gunfire.

The Seafire was a development of the famous Spitfire to enable carrier operations. The version on show, a Seafire 17, was rescued from a scrap yard and painstakingly restored to airworthy condition by Kennet Aviation. It saw service with the carrier Ocean in the late 1940s. The Mk17 is powered by a Rolls Royce Griffon engine with a four-bladed propeller. A total of 2,570 Seafires were built.

Skill

Merlin and Lynx helicopters of the Royal Navy will provide the modern history of the Fleet Air Arm, including the Black Cats helicopter team of two Lynx helicopters from 702 Squadron.

Rear Admiral Ian Tibbitt, the Royal Navy's director general, safety and engineering, said: "Battle-winning edge can only come from an aviation team that can deliver fighting aircraft from the sea. It is team skill that marks out people in the Fleet Air Arm today."

For more information on the International Air Fair, and to keep up with last minute bookings, visit www.bigginhillairfair.co.uk.

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Drive-by gang's morning attack

A MAN has been the victim of a drive-by style robbery in Tenterden.

The 22-year-old was walking along Oaks Road from Golden Square by the recreation ground around 2am on Saturday morning, April 18.

The victim says a white vehicle drew up behind him and four or five men got out, all wearing hooded tops.

He was then punched and kicked by the gang resulting in serious injuries including two fractured bones to back.

The offenders stole his wallet, a mobile phone card and a black Xbox video game console controller and an Xbox game.

If you have any information about the attack call police on 01303 289180 or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

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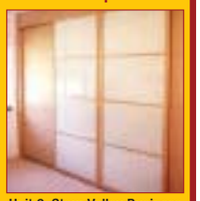

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Warning economic crisis and job losses will impact on people's mental wellbeing

Tough times leading to recession depression

By JENNA PUDELEK
jennna.pudelek@kosmedia.co.uk

MENTAL health experts are preparing for an increase in number of people needing help for anxiety and depression triggered by the economic crisis.

A new report by the Mental Health Foundation found the credit crunch and the recession were having an adverse effect on the nation's wellbeing – with 66 per cent of people surveyed saying they were experiencing fear and anxiety as a result.

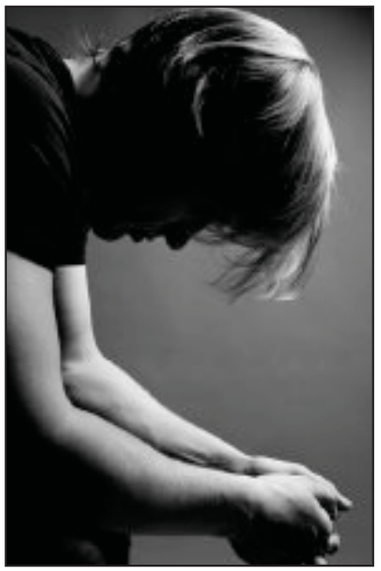
A spokesman for Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust, which provides mental health services in the county, said: "The current economic climate and the impact it has on people, most notably their employment status, may lead to an increase in people needing help for problems such as anxiety or depression.

Anxiety disorders

"We expect there to be a rise of these conditions in the general population and we have also heard anecdotal evidence of organisations like Citizens Advice Bureau and Relate receiving an increased number of calls for help and information at present."

Anxiety UK, the country's largest anxiety disorders charity, has reported a doubling of calls to its telephone helpline in the first two months of this year.

Mary Greenwood, director of the Canterbury branch of the mental health charity Samaritans, said: "In the last few months we've noticed that people have been talking about their problems in the context of the economic crisis, and worrying about how they're going to keep their jobs and support their families.



BREAKING POINT: Credit crunch is driving more people to the edge of despair

"Mounting debt and insecurity about housing are also issues. It's no surprise that people are becoming more fearful and anxious.

"The deepening financial and economic crises could lead to an increase in suicide rates nationwide so we'd encourage people to look out for family, friends and colleagues in these times of economic uncertainty."

In its report, which was published last Tuesday, the MHF also blamed a "culture of fear" for increasing levels of anxiety, which has been caused by widespread misconceptions over the risk posed by threats to our safety like crime and terrorism.

The charity raised concerns that fear was partly driving the economic crisis because people are too afraid to spend, lend and invest; despite the fact these actions could help end the recession.

A nationwide campaign has now been launched by the MHF to protect the public's mental health against anxiety problems.

The Kent trust's spokesman said that anyone concerned about their mental wellbeing should talk to their GP. He said: "Sadly, there is still a stigma that surrounds mental illness but we all need to recognise that we all have mental health needs and we can all become mentally unwell.

"We support the MHF's call for a national campaign to tackle stigma we are preparing a series of stigma challenging initiatives under the national 'Time to Change' campaign."

He said that although there had not been an increase in the amount of people accessing the trust's specialist mental health services, future data could show growth due to the recession. But much of the care for people with depression and anxiety disorders is managed by GPs, he said.

Ms Greenwood added: "You can call us in complete confidence if you"d like to talk about any worries. Maybe you're having problems finding the rent, anxious about keeping up with mortgage repayments or have been made redundant from work.

"We know that financial problems can impact on home life and relationships, and can leave people feeling stressed, out of control and fearful for the future."

• ***For more information go to www.mentalhealth.org.uk. The Canterbury Samaritans can be reached on 01227 457 777. The Samaritans national helpline is 08457 90 90 90 or email jo@samaritans.org to find your local branch.***

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Gurkhas back in the arms of their loved ones after latest tour of Afghanistan

Home safe and sound

By **NICK AMES**
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

GURKHA soldiers enjoyed an emotional reunion with their families when they returned to Folkestone after a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan.

A total of 128 members of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles were greeted by flag-waving colleagues and pipes and drums as they got off a convoy of buses at Shorncliffe Barracks.

Also there to greet them last Sunday was Rifleman Kushal Limbu, who lost both of his legs in a bomb blast.

He had been treated at the Headley Court Rehabilitation Centre in Surrey – but ensured he was on hand to welcome his comrades home.

Fighting

The battalion lost two of its members in Afghanistan last November.

Rifleman Yubraj Rai, 28, was killed on November 4, and Colour Sergeant Krishnabahadur Dura, 36, died 11 days later.

The Gurkhas were often in the thick of the fighting against Afghan insurgents and recorded some notable successes.

They were also extremely effective at spotting Taliban fighters pretending to be farmers, as the Gurkhas come from a similar agricultural community.

The soldiers also effectively communicated with the Afghan locals, many of whom understand the soldiers' native Urdu tongue, at least partially.

Pictures: IMAGES INTERNATIONAL LTD

REUNION: Husbands, wives and children were reunited as members of the 2nd Batallion of the Gurkha Rifles returned from Afghanistan

The Gurkhas' commanding officer Lt Col Chris Darby said: "We have left the places we were assigned to safer and that makes the tour a success."

The officer was greeted by his children Poppy, five, and Alfred, two.

Captain Emily Peers added: "It's wonderful to be home and everyone was really looking forward to seeing their families again.

"There has been so much anticipation.

"But of course we will not forget the two men who died. They will be in their comrades thoughts always."

On arrival in Folkestone the soldiers were each presented with ceremonial white scarves called khadas.

Major Toby Jackman explained: "They are a traditional Nepalese welcome home symbol."

Food, beer and soft drinks were also laid on and many of the soldiers received bouquets of flowers.

Around 630 members of the battalion – known as 2RGR – deployed to Afghanistan in October last year.

They have been spread out across Helmand Province in a variety of roles.

These included stabilising the town of Musa Qaleh and operating at patrol bases Minden and Woqab, which are just yards from the forward operating positions of the Taliban.

They also worked alongside the Queen Dragoon Guards, the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment and the Afghan National Army and police force.

News and sport updated daily online
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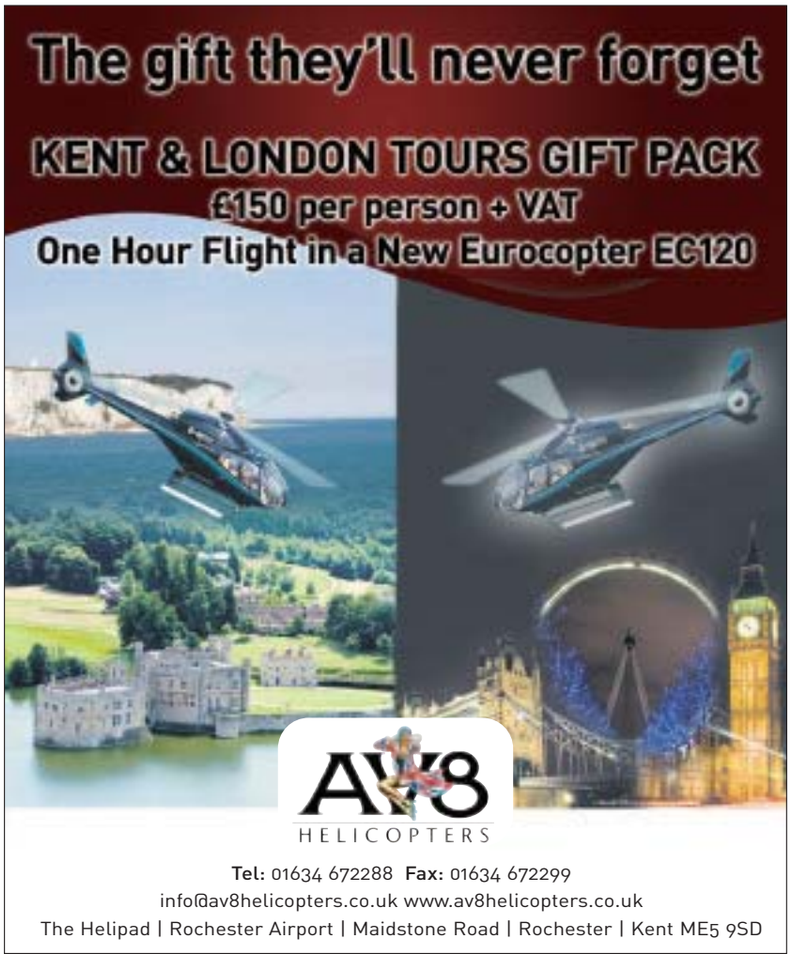
Pictures: MOD

JOB DONE FOR NOW: Gurkhas land after their six-month spell in Helmand Province



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Shrub off the cold winter with some early blooming beauties

By **JANE JEWITT**

LATE spring into early summer is a fabulous time of year. There is still the freshness of spring, but with the added bonus of luxuriant growths and lengthening days.

There are many deciduous shrubs that flower early in the summer, and tolerate a wide range of growing conditions. They are fully hardy and once established will thrive for years and years with remarkably little attention.

One of my very favourites is Philadelphus 'Belle Etoile'. It flowers towards the end of May and into June, has a flower of pure white with a central dot of dark wine, and a perfume that is exquisite. It grows to 1.5 metres and is happy in sun and semi-shade. Philadelphus is a big family, so there are many variations of the plant including tall, dwarf, variegated and golden leafed.

Weigelas have red and pink flowered varieties, with flowers that drape themselves along the length of the arching branches. One of the best is Weigela 'Eva Rathke' for its long flowering season. They are fully hardy and tolerate a wide range of growing conditions, with heights ranging from 1 to 2.5 metres.

If you have room for a specimen tree, have a look at the Cornus family. Commonly called dogwoods, they are perhaps better known as shrubs that are grown for their brightly coloured stems in winter. But there are also Cornus that grow into small trees, and Cornus kousa is one of them. This deciduous tree grows to four metres, is easily grown in any reasonable soil, and only asks for good drainage. The large cream flowers (actually bracts, not flowers) are elegant, and when they cover the whole tree in early summer it is a magnificent sight.

If you want a compact shrub Potentilla is a good choice. This deciduous shrub has tiny leaves and most commonly the flowers are bright yellow. There are other colours, in particular, a white form, 'Abbotswood White', a cream-pink called 'Daydawn' and an orange called 'Sunset'. They prefer full sun and have a long flowering season.

How many others can I mention? Rhododendrons look stately and magnificent at this time of year, but they will need an article all to themselves. All I will say now is to make sure you visit a garden rich in rhododendrons, such as Sheffield Park in Sussex or Borde Hill, south of Gatwick Airport, to see them as fully-grown specimen plants. You will come home full of ideas for your own garden.

Spirea, Kolkwitzia, Oleaira, Ceanothus, Choysia, Crataegus, Skimmia, Syringa, Viburnum, the list could go on and on. All of them are wonderful, well, perhaps not Syringa, but it's all down to personal taste. I wish I could have all the pages of this newspaper to fill it with my photos.

• ***To contact Jane Jewitt call 01732 882711 or email janejewitt@tiscali.co.uk.***

HARDY: Philadelphus Belle Etoile (above) Cornus kousa variety chinensis (top right); and Weigela 'Eva Rathike' (right bottom)

White choice for

STYLISH: Graham & Green Barcelona style mirrored two drawer console or dressing table, £699; white leather stool £399; mirrored bedside table £399 and pair of Venetian style floral etched mirrored angel wings £189; and right White Ripple Low Rocking Chair, £125 from Dwell

By **GABRIELLE FAGAN**

WHILE home experts are currently proclaiming the virtues of colour, it's easy to forget the most versatile shade of them all.

White is often considered a safe or boring choice, suitable only for those who are unfashionably colour-phobic.

But it's a great starting point for any scheme – and needn't require the sort of high maintenance that necessitates you whirling round constantly scrubbing off offending marks or scuffs.

Stylist and white devotee Gail Abbott is passionate about the advantages of using white.

"Pure, fresh and peaceful, a white room can be used as a stylish backdrop to many different types of interior," she enthuses.

Gail, who visited beautiful white interiors around the world during her research for new book Living With White, knows first hand how well white works.

"White can be used to make dark rooms look spacious and airy, reflecting what little light is allowed in," she says.

There's an endless variety of white shades available, from those that are as brilliant white as snow through to warmer, historic shades reminiscent of whipped cream or sea surf. Make sure white's a winner by using warmer shades in north-facing rooms, and using practical finishes such as wipe clean satin in areas such as kitchens and halls.

"White is a brilliant blank canvas, but a room does need to be dressed otherwise it can be a blank, featureless space," Gail adds.

"Consider pairing two different shades of white, add texture in furniture and furnishings, and discreet touches of colour or one vivid coloured feature wall and colour."

Follow the guide to creating great spaces – all white!

Wicked White Walls

"White gives modern spaces a light bright, crisp effect that is the perfect foil for this year's bold colour-blocked look that has only just made its way off the catwalk and into our homes," says Louise Smith, Dulux Colour & Design manager.

She suggests using Dulux Pure Brilliant White (matt emulsion, £15.99 for 2.5 litres), which contrasts well with blues.

For a gentler soft white effect, try White Cotton or White Chiffon for a warm glow, or her favourite, White Mist.

Dulux's Light & Space collection boasts white shades with light-reflecting properties. Look out for Absolute White emulsion (£12.99 for 2.5 litres).

Look out for the new Livingetc paint range (matt emulsion, £19.98 for 2.5 litres), which has six variations on white. The latter's available at B&Q from May.

Budget solution: Paper walls (and cover over imperfections) with the new Superfresco Paintables – white textured wallcoverings – £15 a roll by Graham & Brown.

White Floor Show

Painting floorboards white has long been a cheap and cheerful floor fix for students and this is still a good way of lightening up a room. If you can't face the stress of sanding, painting

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design

and applying a protective coating, you could opt for Scandi-style replacement floorboards.

Dinesen Douglas fir floorboards cost around £76 per square metre from Dinesen Floors, and have been treated with lye and white soap, so the grain shows through.

Budget solution: Wimborne White or Slipper Satin are two of the most popular white shades in Farrow & Ball's floor paint range (from £19 for 750ml).

White Windows

If you hang unlined white bedroom curtains bedroom it's sensible to also have blackout blinds so the early morning light doesn't disturb your sleep.

The Natural Curtain Company has Pencil pleat white curtains (£380), and Roman blinds (£230) in semi-sheer linen.

Budget solution: Go for John Lewis's white Sheer roller blind with leaf pattern, from £29.

White Style

White furniture, particularly seating, can't fail to look luxurious and needn't be incompatible with children's fingers or pets' muddy paws. Be savvy and use loose cotton white covers that are easy to clean (most marks disappear after a high temperature wash) or just protect with white throws.

The beauty of white furniture is that even large pieces are less likely to dominate a space.

If classy country is your preference, the squashy, comfy Ektorp three-seater sofa from Ikea is a steal at £263.28. A white loose cover is £39.15.

Laura Ashley's Provencale furniture, painted in ivory, could complete the picture. Display cabinet, £1,850 and sideboard, £875.

If contemporary's more your bag – and you've got the budget for investment pieces – Heal's has a covetable collection. The white lacquer Luna coffee table (£484.47) resembles a large white pebble, or sink into the Cloud chair, £875.

John Lewis' Iris chair – chrome with white leather-style seats, £67 – could be a hit for a sleek dining room, especially paired with a Freeze extending glass table (£342).

Budget solution: Dwell's stylish range includes a fabulous padded White Ripple rocking chair, £125, and nest of three lacquered tables, £195.

Sleep White!

White's a natural choice for bedrooms, and if the space is kept uncluttered it will be restful and guaranteed to encourage sweet dreams.

The White Company's an obvious destination for all things white. As well as its beautiful bedding it has an excellent range of white-painted wooden furniture.

The Hampton collection has a double bed (£395), bedside table (£150), and chest (£495).

A four-poster, dressed with gauze curtains or unadorned, is an obvious choice for romantics. Lombok's just reduced its white-painted Beijing four-poster, it now costs £740 (was £995).

Continue the feeling of airiness and femininity with mirrored furniture from Graham & Green. The Barcelona-style mirrored dressing table is £699, and a white padded leather stool is £399.

Budget solution: Buy a snow-white headboard from The White Company, £350 for a double size, and fit to an existing divan.

White Touches

Start with The White Company's collection of white photo frames which start from £15 each. Or the new White Wood lamp and white shade, £75.

Graham & Green's white leather Moroccan pouffe, £115, is both useful and appropriate, while its white Palomino cow skin rug, £399, could be a stunning touch of decadence.

Technology can also harmonise with the theme. Add a white frame 19-inch Samsung TV, £219 from John Lewis.

Budget solution: Fill a trolley with homeware from Sainsbury's Tu collection. White diamond pin tuck cushion, £5.99, mini ribbed vase £1.49, and white wicker storage unit, £19.99.

VERY FITTING: Nest of Three White Side Tables, £195 from Dwell

SLEEP TIGHT: The White Company Hampton Bed, double, £395; bedside table £150; Lloyd storage bench £250, Seat pads £16 each; chest of drawers £495; Kew three ball lamp with white shade £75; white wood mounted picture frames from £15 each

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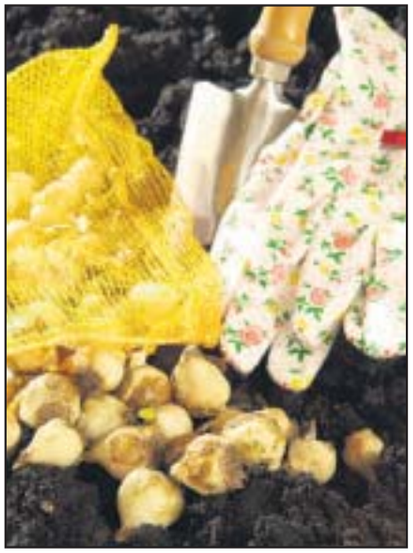

Switch on to the idea of striking summer bulbs

By HANNAH STEPHENSON

WE may still be admiring all our spring-flowering bulbs, as tulips and hyacinths come into their own, but if you want more bulbs in summer, it's time to start planting them now.

There's a wealth of choice for both containers and borders, from fragrant lilies and dahlias, to cannas, gladioli, crocosmia and the Californian firecracker, Dichelostemma ida-maia.

The pineapple plant, Eucomis bicolor, was judged this year's summer bulb of the year by a panel of journalists and horticultural experts in an event organised

GET PLANTING: Top, pineapple plant which was voted summer bulb of the year; above, hostas; above right, crocosmia

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by the Netherlands Flower Bulb Information Centre.

Its striking pineapple-like tuft of colour, sitting above a rosette of wide, fleshy leaves, blooms in July and August.

Plant eucomis in groups in spring, to rise out of gravel in a scree bed or grit at the front of a border. It looks lovely with cream and green variegated hostas and purple heucheras.

While gladioli have earned themselves a reputation for being gaudy and difficult to place in a planting scheme, because their heavy spikes can look ungainly, some more subtle varieties are available. These include Gladiolus callianthus 'Murielae', which can be planted in April and May, either in deep pots or in good soil in the sun, producing deliciously fragrant delicate white petals with a deep burgundy blotch at the throat from August to October.

Most summer-flowering bulbs, corms and tubers are sun lovers, so are ideal for patio pots. Some, such as tuberous begonias, need to be started indoors as they are not frost hardy and can be moved outside once all danger of frost has passed.

Tropical-looking cannas, which produce fleshy exotic leaves and spikes of vibrant flowers from early summer until mid-autumn, can also be planted in pots. Start with the plants indoors in early spring, although I leave my pots of cannas near to the house, covered with a mulch of straw over the winter, and they still come back.

They like plenty of water during the growing season and rich fertile soil, so grow them in large pots in John Innes No. 3 compost. Protect against slugs and snails, which love the young emerging leaves.

Rejuvenating

Of course, the jewel in the crown of scent has to be the lily, with its impressive trumpets of blooms in many colours. Buy bulbs as soon as they appear in shops and keep them cold until you plant them. Ideally they should be planted in early spring before they dry out.

If you are planting summer bulbs in your beds and borders, draw up a design plan before you start. You don't want smaller bulbs being lost by larger perennials during the growing season.

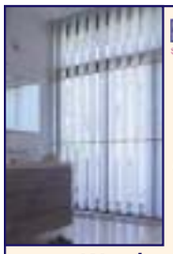
Some bulbs are perfect for rejuvenating beds where annuals are running out of steam and perennials like lupins and delphiniums have been and gone. Foxtail lilies (eremurus), which come in a range of colours, produce tall bottlebrushes of flowers in midsummer, growing from one to two metres.

However, they do have to be planted in early autumn in a sunny, warm, sheltered area to protect against strong winds. They need winter cold to flower.

Remember that most summer bulbs like heat, so a sunny spot is essential. They also need really good drainage, so add some grit or sand to the soil before planting.

As a general rule, plant bulbs at three times their depth below the surface of the soil or compost, or follow instructions given on the packet.

Some summer-flowering bulbs, such as dahlias, will need lifting at the end of the autumn and storing until next year. Others, such as the early summer-flowering allium, will go on for years with no fuss at all.



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CALM OASIS: The Secret Gardens and The Salutation manor house in Sandwich, Kent

Take a step into the secret garden

HIDDEN in the heart of Sandwich you will find an oasis of calm and serenity.

The Secret Gardens of Sandwich sit along the quayside of this medieval town and are almost completely hidden by the ancient city walls; enticing anyone with a sense of curiosity to catch a glimpse of what lies beyond them.

The Secret Gardens and The Salutation manor house which stands proudly at their centre were designed by renowned English architect Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1911-12. The Farrer brothers who commissioned the project desired a weekend retreat from which to enjoy the coastal air and to this day, it is still a beautiful and restful place to be.

Rose beds

In addition to the house, Lutyens also designed the garden layout resulting in strong architectural lines, tree-lined avenues and the framing effect achieved by archways and hedges. The outside space works in harmony with the house in many ways. The ornate bowling lawn which lies to the south of The Salutation manor perfectly mirrors the layout of the dining room with the rose beds echoing the windows and doors on either side of the room.

Seldom does the name Lutyens appear without that of his famous collaborator Gertude Jekyll. Together they created many country houses and gardens with Lutyens designing the house and Jekyll providing the garden design and planting scheme. While there is no definitive proof of Jekyll's involvement with this project her influence is certainly clear. She believed that a garden should offer unexpected views and visual surprises and should be made up of many 'rooms' each with its own character; a way of thinking which is certainly in evidence at The Secret Gardens.

One of the most striking garden features is the Main Perennial Borders which run the length of the garden. From the Lutyens bench at the bottom of the garden they draw they eye up the lawn towards the house, creating a view to be gazed upon for hours

Having been lost to wilderness for 25 years, an extensive restoration and re-planting programme by a dedicated team of gardeners has returned the gardens to their original beauty. Now open to the public, some original garden features such as the elegant Bowling Lawn and Holm Oak Walk have been revived. The White and Yellow gardens, the enchanting Woodland area and the wild Spring garden with its purple pyramid orchids can all be enjoyed by guests wandering in the garden.

The Kitchen garden still fulfils its original purpose in providing the house with vegetables and herbs and like the rest of the gardens is propagated using fully organic methods. The Vegetable area which lies at the bottom of the Gardens beautifully fulfils both practical and aesthetic needs with its attractive and colourful varieties of plants. In the central bed grows corn, beans and squash which forms a relationship called the Three Sisters System. These plants, when grown together provide all the nutrients which each other requires and therefore can be grown together continuously without depleting the soil.

While keeping a firm handle on the traditional layout and style of the original garden, several recent additions have been made. The Tropical Border creates a more exotic dimension to the planting and provides colour late into the season. This is also where you will find a Wollemi Pine, an incredibly rare tree which will be of special interest to anyone with a passion for unusual plants.

Throughout the grounds you will also discover several copper sculptures which give the garden an entirely new role as a glorious natural art gallery for resident sculptor Emily Stone.

The Tea Room at the Secret Gardens is really very special. Situated in the Old Gatehouse and extended onto a charming wooden terrace beneath lofty lime trees; the fully licensed Tea Room is a perfect spot, come rain or shine. The crockery, silverware and cake stands which were sourced from the Savoy Hotel all help to evoke the elegant Edwardian pastime of taking tea. The delicious cream teas, homemade cakes and light lunches mean the Tea Room has something for any time of day and is the ideal place to while away an hour or two.

Details

The Secret Gardens, Knightrider Street, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9EW Tel: 01304 619 919
www.the-secretgardens.co.uk
Opening Times 2009
April 11 – September 30: 10am to 5pm
October 1 – December 18: 10am to 4pm
Open every day of the week except Thursday
The house is not open to the public.
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Family ticket (two adults and up to three children) £14
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The Collage Pendant from Louis Poulsen Lighting was designed by Louise Campbell and inspired by rays of light through tree foliage. Collage is made from laser cut acrylic and ads a light and interesting ambience over the dining table. Available in a variety of colours, from £725. The Campbell 210 glass pendants give focus to the peninsula while supplying light exactly where it's needed. RRP £385. www.louispousen.com.

Interior designer, Helle Hylleberg answers readers' design dilemmas

Q We are looking for a good quality high gloss kitchen – in a medium price range. The way we have laid out our kitcen allows for an island, but we would need optimal corner storage too. We are debating whether to go for a bright colour or plain white. We'd appreciate your advice.

Kate & Andrew, Maidstone

A Most people only change their kitchen very few times – so it would be safe to go for white. You can paint some of the walls in a bright colour – much more cost-effective and easy to change than putting in a completely new kitchen. If you do go for a bright colour, chose one that's not just a popular colour – they have very limited life-span. You are right to think of the right kind of storage in your planning! Crown Imperial do a great interior range called Spaceworks – especially designed to get the best out of your cupboard space. Their white high gloss kitchen is called Rialto High Gloss and you should be able to find a retailer near you. For details visit www.crown-imperial.co.uk.

Q We are debating which kind of lighting to choose for our dining area. You see downlighters everywhere, so we'd like to do something different. We have an extendable dining table. Can you help?

S & K, Hythe

A Yes, downlighters is a popular choice – so why not choose a pendant with character? You could splash out on a designer lead pendant – but Ikea also do a great range of lighting. If you get your electrician to fit it on a track you will be able to move it making sure the lighting is optimal even when the table is extended.

If you have any questions you'd like to ask Helle, email hylleberg@live.co.uk or post them, marked Homes & Gardens Q&A, to KOS Media, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR.

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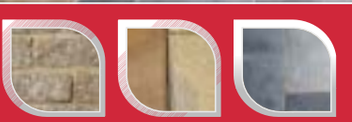

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April on the plot

HOEING

A dry spell at this time of year means perfect hoeing weather. Dirty Nails gets busy with his hoe as early in the day as possible, to give sunshine plenty of time to shrivel up the annihilated weeds. He aims to pass the blade back and forth through the top layer of soil with small, smooth strokes. Dirty Nails keeps his blade sharp with a small file which he carries in his pocket. Stopping regularly to keep his blade keen also allows him an opportunity to stretch his back. The hoe is number one tool in the battle with weeds from now on and through the summer. He loves getting in amongst his crops, having a really close look all the time. Hoe when it is sunny, dry, and before you can see the weeds.

RUNNER BEANS

Runner beans can be sown now. Dirty Nails grows 'Enorma' which is high yielding with long, straight beans of excellent flavour. He also grows 'White Emergo' which is an old-fashioned, white flowered variety. It is prolific and tasty, as well as looking beautiful when in flower.

He pops the classic pink and white speckled beans into small pots of compost, on their ends, (4cm) deep. These are placed in the greenhouse or on a sunny windowsill and watered. Kept moist, they should start to sprout in a few days. Dirty Nails won't consider planting them outside until after May 12 because they are very tender and easily killed by a late frost.

ROOT VEG

Parsnips, sown in mid-March, are just beginning to show their first pair of small pale-green leaves. It is a hard job spotting them amongst the seedling weeds at this stage, but Dirty Nails always makes an effort to clear around the tiny 'snips when they first emerge. It's a painstaking job but well worth making the effort before the parsnip bed turns into a mini-jungle.

Dirty Nails has thinned his salsify and scorzonera this week too. They were sown in the first week of April and have germinated quickly. Two seeds were sown at (15cm) intervals, and by now they look like strands of grass. The weakest one has been pulled from each sowing station, the lines hoed and watered.

• **How to Grow Your Own Food by Dirty Nails (ISBN 9781905862115) is available from www.dirtynails.co.uk or Amazon, rrp £10.99.**

PREPARING THE VEGGIES: Above left, use a hoe to annihilate weeds; above right, parsnip seedling, this one germinated in an old toilet roll; right, for tender young runner beans plant seeds now

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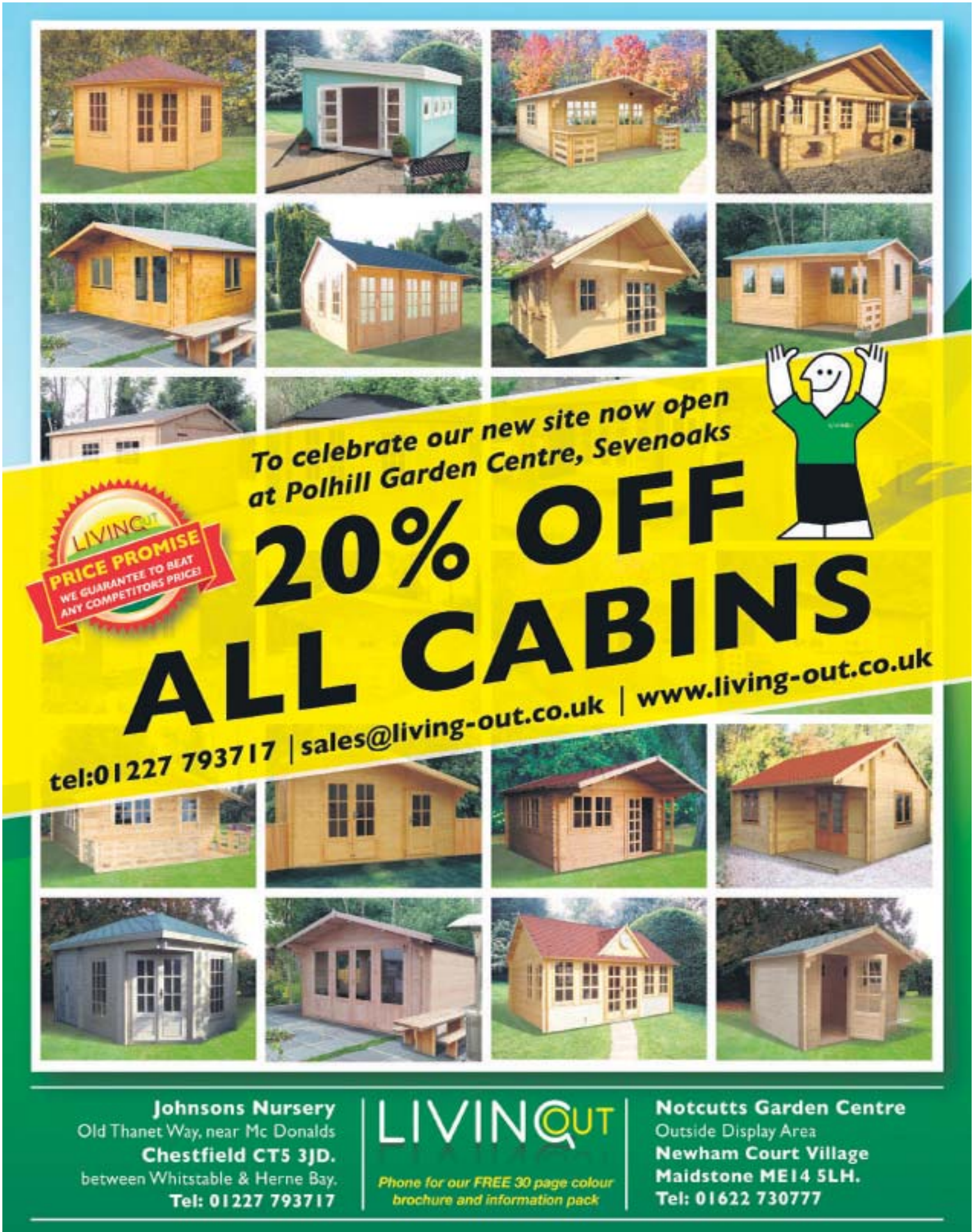
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CHRIS BRITCHER
CAMPAIGN EDITOR
chris.britcher@kosmedia.co.uk

Join our Food for Schools scheme and your purchase will make a big difference

New scheme a benefit to mind, body – and schools

YOU already know the benefits of buying local food and drink and now thanks to our campaign you can help boost the coffers of your local school too.

Food for Schools is our new exciting scheme to donate money to our schools every time you shop with www.foodforkent.co.uk.

Our hugely successful campaign has been urging all our readers to help support local growers, producers and suppliers in order to support and protect local economies, cut down on food miles and deliver all the great taste benefits.

And now you can deliver a direct, significant, financial benefit to your local school – just by shopping at www.foodforkent.co.uk.

But we need your help to let us know which schools should get the cash and to help spread the word of all the benefits to health, the local economy and your back pocket, that buying local brings.

The www.foodforkent.co.uk website is spearheading our campaign by offering a huge range of seasonal produce – all sourced, wherever possible, from Kent – and is the perfect one-stop shop for all your shopping needs.

Now every time you place an order for more than £40 on the site, we'll donate £2.50 to your nominated school.

All you have to do is let us know which school you want to support and give the money to; and then tell your friends and other parents.

Every time they then spend on the site, another £2.50 will go towards the school – you'll be surprised at how quickly it all adds up.

The scheme has already been trialled at a handful of schools across the county and is proving a big hit with parents eager to take part with schools seeing the very real financial benefits.

Jonathan Parker, of www.foodforkent.co.uk, explains: "Healthy, fresh produce should be an integral part of every child's diet.

"Food for Schools is an exciting new scheme where we can raise awareness of the benefits of local produce and donate significant funds to our county's schools.

"We've run a successful pilot and now we are rolling it out to the whole of Kent. If you care about children's diets, local produce and your local school please get in touch to see how you can help. Together we're going to raise a big number for Kent's schools."

You may be a parent, teacher, governor or member of the PTA, but to ensure your school benefits simply contact Jonathan Parker direct by emailing your details to schools@foodforkent.co.uk.

You will then be given a special code – every time you then shop with www.foodforkent.co.uk £2.50 will go towards the school – with the money handed over every month.

Foodforkent.co.uk is created by teaming up with long-established local producers of food and drink across the county with impeccable reputations and a guarantee of top quality.

It offers fresh, seasonal vegetables, fruit, meats, bread, dairy products and much more besides.

What's more, our price comparisons prove you can actually save money from buying like-for-like products at supermarkets – dispelling the myth buying local comes at a cost.

But don't take our word for it – visit the site today; www.foodforkent.co.uk.

Free asparagus giveaway

IT is in season for just a few short weeks, but while it's here it's one of the taste sensations of the year.

Kent asparagus is available now and as a special promotion anyone placing an order at www.foodforkent.co.uk will receive a free bunch so they can taste if for themselves.

The special offer applies to every single order placed between now and Sunday, May 3. Simply log-on and place your order at the site and before you know it, your shopping will arrive – complete with the free gift.

Meanwhile, next Saturday, May 2, the Penshurst Farmers' Market will be celebrating the crop's arrival with a special Asparagus Festival.

It will showcase locally grown asparagus while local farmer Michael Bourne will be on hand to showcase the best way to cook and grow asparagus.

Alison Shamash, the Asparagus Festival organiser, said: "English asparagus is always popular with visitors to the market. It has only a short six-week season, and it needs to be as fresh as possible, so local is definitely best."

Now with added value

FOODFORKENT.co.uk is already proving a massive success – and now it's even better value.

It's already a one-stop shop for all your family's shopping needs and boasts the latest seasonal produce, and now if you spend more than £70 you can SAVE by qualifying for free delivery. Which means you have more to spend on the very finest food and drink this county has to offer.

Fish another tasty treat

THERE'S more to www.foodforkent.co.uk than simply fruit and vegetables. And as this video clip explains, the range of fresh fish underlines the quality the site offers. Simply log-on to our free broadband web TV site www.yourkenttv.co.uk and search 'food'.

foodforkent.co.uk We are committed to adding more local suppliers to our online service and any local business or producer that wishes to join our campaign should contact us at foodforkent.co.uk or email us at feedback@kosmedia.co.uk

KENT ON SUNDAY

COMMENT

Cowardly way to treat brave men

OUR Government's treatment of the brave Nepalese soldiers who fought and risked their lives for this country is truly shameful.

Gurkhas have fought a long battle for equal rights – to be treated the same as any other member of the British Army – and many thought Friday's announcement from the Home Office would finally bring them justice.

But their hopes were dashed after the Government imposed strict criteria on settlement rights that only a few of the pre-1997 Gurkha veterans will be able to meet.

The decision has been widely condemned, and rightly so, especially after last year's High Court ruling that the Government's existing policy on the Gurkhas was unlawful.

If this announcement was based on financial concerns, then that should have no place in deciding the future of brave men who have risked their lives for this country.

No wonder so many of the Gurkhas' supporters have said they feel ashamed.

The service these renowned soldiers have given this country down the decades has been invaluable. They have fought for our freedom, yet they continue to be denied the freedom to settle here if they wish.

That Gurkhas now fighting in Afghanistan have the right to stay but their grandfathers who fought in World War Two do not, flies in the face of common sense.

Kent is proud of its link with the Gurkhas through Shorncliffe Barracks and is honoured to have them here. In true Gurkha spirit, they have pledged to fight on – and we will continue to back them to the hilt.

OPINION: The danger of nuclear attack

Tim Garbutt warns us to beware the threat of a dirty war from the east

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong-il is casting an eye over Kent – well not quite.

There are still a fair few miles and several thousand South Korean and US troops before the North Koreans land at Dover.

What is rather more worrying, especially during the rather muted run-up to the anniversary of the formation of Chinese communism in October, 1949, is the North Korean satellite and missile launched this month.

The last North Korean missile Taepong-2 was launched in 2006 and wreckage hit parts of Alaska.

The latest missile – there are no reports of Radio Pyongyang's revolutionary playlist beaming in from outer space so it's fairly safe to assume it blew up over the Pacific – poses a similar threat.

North Korea now has the technology to fire a missile into South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, central Russia and any eastern Chinese city such as Shanghai.

As I say, we don't need to call out the Home Guard just yet, but with the quiet release from four years' house arrest of Pakistan's Dr AQ Khan two weeks ago – the father of the Pakistani nuclear bomb – the real Axis of Evil is alive and well with Pakistani nuclear technology working its way via Burma and China to North Korea.

Any policeman on the beat at Bluewater or travellers using the Channel Tunnel may want to pause for a moment and consider the implications of such dirty nuclear technology finding its way into Al-Qaedea's hands.

New aircraft carriers and upgrading Trident nuclear submarines have little effect against the proliferation of modern nuclear technology – and no effect against chemical or biological weapons such as the one used on Tokyo's subway.

And any bankers retreating to their Kent country pile after letting Europe's banking system implode may want to ponder the consequences to the world economy of a North Korean missile wiping out financial centres such as Tokyo or Hong Kong.

We're not too far away from the reality that dictatorship itself will be a crime against humanity

The North Korean population is, of course, close to famine with reports in the winter of grass being eaten – so the military regime led by the Dear Leader only has to think of its own survival.

Hence one of the world's largest armies squaring up to the USA's largest overseas troop force and navy, in a war that never ended after 1953, with only a truce at Panmunjong for the UN's first war.

Such a repulsive dictatorship armed with missile technology brings to mind Saddam Hussein who not only invaded Iran and then Kuwait but proceeded to drop Scud (the same technology as Kent received with Hitler's V-2 rockets) missiles on Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Iran's nuclear reactors seem far less dangerous than the Pakistani, Burmese and Korean juntas' nuclear plans.

With the Sudanese president facing war crimes charges and some of the Congo and Rwanda leadership facing similar penalties at the International Criminal Court in the Hague we're not too far away from the reality that dictatorship itself will be a crime against humanity.

The last few regimes such as North Korea and Burma are largely propped up by China and a few rogue investors.

Perhaps it is a small world after all and Kent should be doing more to develop democracy as we near the county elections.

We might just see China visit Kent in 2012 with a Free Burma and Free North Korea delegation. Gold for KCC then, rather than not even in the stadium as at the moment.

• Tim Garbutt is managing director of Sincerity Agency (www.sincerityagency.com) the leading green and ethical advertising agency based in Canterbury.

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Fantastic hospital care

I was a patient in the intensive care unit – and later the high dependency unit – at Medway Maritime Hospital in Gillingham from early December, last year, until January.

I would like to thank all the staff for their dedicated care and treatment. I was on a ventilator and could not move out of bed. The nursing staff were marvellous and very kind. The doctors and nurses work very hard, are dedicated and need all the praise and recognition that they can get.

My wife and I cannot thank them enough.

P Bennett, Isle of Sheppey

Clish of the tight uns?

Something for nothing, eh? (Free static caravans, KoS, last week). Paying £750 just to have one's power and water switched on and off and the enormous cost of a low-loader to remove it at the end of the season doesn't sound a bargain after paying up to £4,000 upfront for ground rent.

In holiday park manager Mr Clish's words, for caravans barely more than 10 years old to "have had love and money lavished on them" illustrates the short-lived nature of the "investment". The ever-changing models and monetary desires of operators can lead to a rapid depreciation rate. Add the mandatory 15 per cent commission payable on selling and the fact no law exists to protect your rights, there is a good reason not to get too carried away during your 'free' trial.

Colin Packman, Tonbridge

Losing their bearings

What is the point of Meridian Tonight? What purpose does it now serve? There was a time when the South East had award-winning local ITV programmes and even had a studio in Dover.

Over the years we have had to endure change which we were assured would improve our viewing. Such improvement included snippets from obscure and far-away locations which only locals could appreciate.

There is now little or no important local news. Personable and well-loved presenters appear to have evaporated. There is not much to be said for the morning input either.

Each evening we are bombarded with neither one thing nor the other as lacklustre Meridian Tonight limps along. Poor Fred Dineage, with his wealth of experience and talent, appears to be struggling to anchor a rather small silk purse of a programme cobbled together from a multitude of sows' ears.

I have no more interest in what is happening in Portsmouth or Reading than I have in Birmingham or Liverpool. I am sure viewers in those areas feel much the same about our news and events.

I know times are hard, but the present offering leaves much to be desired. My feelings seem to be mirrored in comments on the internet. Luckily, as ITV bombards us with seemingly endless commercial breaks, there is always the remote control and the haven of local BBC coverage.

JA Porter, Deal

Rural homes law is absurd

Interesting comments from Nigel Whitburn of Rural Kent – strange name for an organisation which would destroy our countryside – in your story on rural housing.

What he conveniently fails to mention is that, by government decree, affordable rural housing can only be built outside the boundaries of villages. In other words, in open countryside. How absurd is this?

There are thousands of empty houses in the UK, yet villages are under pressure to accept more homes beyond their boundaries. Here in Newnham there is a strong movement to squash attempts to have six affordable homes built outside the village perimeter. This is not an objection to affordable housing, just a belief that the countryside should not be eroded. Mr Whitburn, one assumes, does not live in a "chocolate box village" and is quite happy to spoil them where he can.

As for a Nimby mentality, these homes will be in open country, so his choice of words is rather unfortunate.

Newnham has no shops, no jobs, no school and the public transport is pathetic. Yet just a few miles away in Faversham there are empty sites crying out for regeneration, with amenities readily to hand. Mr Whitburn's time could be better spent asking the Government to change the law and just allow affordable housing within village boundaries. I have yet to hear any logical reason why the law is the way it is. Thankfully, local planners are more sympathetic to maintaining our countryside.

Roger A Morton, Newnham

YOUR LETTERS

KOS Media welcomes your comments and letters for publication. Please send correspondence to: Letters to the Editor, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR. Alternatively fax them to: 01303 817002, or email them to editorial@kosmedia.co.uk. Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances. Please also include a daytime telephone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit letters.

Next stop, scrapyard

Bus companies clearly employ a system whereby they place new vehicles on the major in-town routes and gradually move replaced buses down the scale, the last stop before the scrapyard being the infrequent inter-town routes.

Such is the fate of Stagecoach's Ashford to Maidstone service, where not only are the vehicles usually ancient and rarely cleaned, but, judging by the regular breakdowns, appear to receive minimal maintenance.

Since repair crews or replacement buses have to travel from Ashford or buses are simply cancelled when breakdowns occur, passengers suffer additional delays to a service where intervals between buses are already two hours.

The travel experience is not enhanced by the deplorable habit of some passengers of dropping rubbish on the floor. Plus, of course, the "feet on the seat" and "I'm going to inflict my choice of music on everyone else" syndrome. Goodness knows what foreign visitors think – but once the KIG vandals have imposed their 21st century dark satanic mills at junction eight, there will be few of those.

E Egan, Harrietsham

Memories of 'Ratty'

In the 1960s the marshlands of Abbey Wood teemed with water voles. I watched them many times as they swam in the reed beds.

On one occasion I took a class of 30 pupils to sit on a bank while they watched the voles.

The book I was reading to the class at the time was The Wind in the Willows and the children were enraptured by seeing 'Ratty'.

Measures to ensure the survival of these delightful creatures should be fully supported.

Brenda Coomber (formerly Austin), Darenth

Letters continued on page 56

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BIRTHS

ABERNETHY
Justine and Hugh Abernethy celebrate the birth of their daughter Olivia Ruby Abernethy born on the 12th April 2009, weighing 6lbs 14ozs.

ALLEN
Mike and Sam celebrate the birth of their son Blake Mark Allen on 9th April 2009, weighing 7lb 5oz.

ASHFORD
To Robert and Laura a beautiful daughter, Jessica Lilly, born on 8th April 2009 at 11.43am weighing 8lb 5oz. A new baby sister for Hollie.

BERAET
Jenny and Andrew Beraet celebrate the birth of their daughter Elizabeth, born on 2nd April 2009 weighing 5lbs 6ozs.

CHALMERS-STEVENS
Darren and Tricia Chalmers-Stevens celebrate the birth of their daughter Mia Katelyn Chalmers-Stevens born on 15th April 2009, weighing 8lb 12oz.

FAULKNER
Craig and Sophie of Whitstable proudly announce the birth of their beautiful son, Edward Craig, on 9th April 2009 at 13.56 cweighing 5lb 6oz.

GOMES OLDRIDGE
Julie and Richard Oldridge of Ash celebrate the birth of their son Reuben Gordon Gomes Oldridge on 31st March 2009.

GRAFF
Samuel and Maria are delighted to announce the birth of their second daughter, Alissa Katie Wairimu Graff, a sister for Bethany.

GREGORY
Liz and Darren of Margate are delighted to announce the birth of their son Lewis James, born on 10 April 2009 at QEQM.

HAMMOND
Oliver Clive Kenneth born to proud parents Graham and Atherly of Tonbridge on 10th April 2009 weighing 7lb 3oz.

KENIGER
Jon and Emily of Tonbridge are proud to announce the birth of their beautiful daughter Summer Alice Rose on 8th April 2009 weighing 7lb 5oz. A baby sister for Drew

RILEY
Isabelle Mary Katie Riley born on 25th March 2009, weighing 7lb 8oz. Daughter to Fran and Andy and sister to Oliver and Emily.

SAMSON
Arlo Joe born on the 14th April 2009, weighing 8lbs. Son to Christopher and Kate of Hythe. Our most beautiful and precious son.

SENNETT
Lee and Vicki are delighted to announce the birth of Dylan James, a beautiful baby brother for Finn on the 4th April at Canterbury.

STEVENS
Michelle and Karll celebrate the birth of our son Karlos Stevens on 3rd April 2009.

STURROCK
Keith and Suzanne are pleased to announce the birth of Emily Francesca born on the 9th April 2009, weighing 8lb 2oz. A little sister to Jessica, we could not be happier.

THOMAS
Terry and Leigh of Herne Bay are very proud to announce the birth of their beautiful daughter, Demi-Louise Jacqueline Thomas, on 12th April 2009 at 1.30pm weighing 8lb 1oz.

VERNAU-CHAPMAN
Hollie-Mai Marie Louise Vernau-Chapman born on 14th April 2009, weighing 6lb 2oz. Daughter to Hayley Vernau and Matthew Chapman of Maidstone.

DEATHS

BARNES
Flora Barnes (nee Petley) late of Minster in Thanet and Ramsgate, died on 13th April 2009 in Andover Hampshire aged 98 years. She was muched loved by all her family and will be sadly missed.

BROWN
Sybil Frances of Ash died peacefully on 12th April 2009. Funeral at Barham Crematorium 29th April 2009 at 1.20pm.

BUDDLE
James William Buddle of Ramsgate passed away on 15th April 2009. Enquires to Aston Walker Margate 01843 227059.

CHEESEMAN
Peggy Cheeseman of Dover, previously of Ashford. Passed away on the 12th April 2009. A loved one is not gone, until they are forgotten! And to live in the hearts of those left behind is to live forever!

ELLIOTT
We are very sad to announce the passing of Eileen Victoria Elliott who died at The Lions Hospice on the 12th April. The funeral will take place at Medway Crematorium at 11.00 am on the 28th April. All who knew Eileen are very welcome. flowers (to Morris and Partners Windmill street Gravesend) or donations to The Lions Hospice. Thankyou.

HALL
Olive Iris passed away peacefully on 15th April 2009 in Maidstone Hospital. She will be sadley missed by all her family and friends.

JAGGAR
Humphrey Charles Jaggar passed away peacefully on the 15th April 2009. Much loved husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather.

JONES
Linda Jones passed away at home on 17th April 2009. Dearly loved, sadly missed by all her family and friends. Funeral enquiries to Co-operative Funeralcare Gravesend.

ROBERTS
Russell Roberts passed away on 16th April 2009, aged 56. Dearly loved husband of Susan, Father of Helen, Louise, Daniel, Amy and James. Funeral service at East Farleigh Church on 1st May at 3pm, all enquiries to Sears of Barming.

SCOTT
The Reverend William Scott MBE passed away peacefully at The Red House Nursing Home, Canterbury on 19th April 2009. He will be greatly missed by Vivien and the family. Any enquiries to Lyons Funeral Directors of Canterbury.

Letters continued from page 55

It's shear madness

In November NO2ID warned of the impact the Government's nasty ID cards for foreigners spin would have on our cultural and economic life. We said people would decide Britain had become too unfriendly, that they would be put off from coming here, and that the loss of their skilled labour would damage the economy.

Now the Wool Marketing Board is warning of a crisis facing sheep farmers. They are unable to find skilled labour to shear sheep during the hot summer months. This means wool goes unsold, and if we have hot weather, livestock will suffer.

Farmers can't attract the labour required because the Australian and New Zealand shearers who come here annually have decided this year the cost, hassle and intrusive bureaucratic process necessary to obtain a biometric ID card means it is no longer worth the effort. Who can blame them? If this scheme continues, it's not just the sheep that will be feeling the heat this summer.

Ian Taylor, NO2ID, Dover

Our hazardous streets

Each Tuesday morning in Dental Street, Hythe, residents face the prospect of picking their way through rubbish including stale food, litter and soiled nappies. Residents cannot use wheelie bins, so leave household rubbish for collection that day in plastic bags.

These bags are attacked by seagulls. No news there. Many of us in Shepway live near the sea and that means gulls. Surely it is not beyond the ingenuity of man to devise some way to provide gull-proof containers which are portable enough for residents to handle. Small plastic bins to put a plastic bag in, similar to the black bins we already have?

Shepway spends a considerable amount of our money clearing litter from our streets and yet, because of the use of such bags, litter goes from bad to worse. The type of rubbish from household bags is not just unsightly, it is dangerous to public health. The cats and rats are having a fine old time. The local authority must look at this problem seriously.

Peter W Brandon, Hythe

Dumbed-down exams

Sid Hollands, in his vituperative letter, could have at least tried to get one thing right – the name's Doug, not David. Where is the bile in my letter? I use Department for Education tables for my references.

In my defence, I went to a secondary modern, not a grammar school (I wish I had), so where are the sneers, Mr Hollands? My desire is quite simple: all children to be taught to the best of their ability. Unfortunately, the Government has faffed about with the primary curricula so much that some children have been arriving at secondary school virtually innumerate and illiterate. To cover their backs the Government has dumbed down the GCSE (so much so that universities have had to change the entrance exams) hence the IGCSE, IB and the new Cambridge Pre-U. That is hardly the fault of the grammar schools. Finally, Mr Hollands, I was useless at cricket.

Doug Cheverst, Bexleyheath

Head for the border

Just as Romania tears down its brutal architectural monuments to the Stalinist Ceaucescu era, Gravesham council presses ahead with plans to build hideous, charmless blocks in the very heart of the town.

All in the name of regeneration. And the developers? Those icons of style, taste and sensitivity, Edinburgh Properties.

Why Gravesham's councillors, many of whom live well away from Gravesend, think any of us would warm to the ghastly new proposals one cannot imagine. The Lord Street car park area was once covered with a charming little village of terraced townhouses.

This is how most people want to live. They want to bump into their neighbours, for their front door to be on the ground floor, to have a sense of community. This would be better for low crime rates, better for a sense of belonging – and much, much better for the look and ambience of the town.

People are fed up with the awful excrescences our council keeps trying to impose on us. We spent a year stopping The Tower. We don't want to have to spend another year stopping this monstrosity. Edinburgh Properties should be given their marching orders north, back to the Lowlands.

P Carter, Gravesend

More food for thought

It is Clive Wilkins-Oppler who should face facts. Most people couldn't care less about the fate of foxes. We are more concerned about the fate of our children and grandchildren when we have a Government that cares more about the rights of just about everything but its own people.

Our country produces less of the food we need every year yet our population keeps on growing, boosted by an open-door immigration policy.

The blockades by French fishermen caused chaos in the Channel and gridlock on the roads after a matter of hours.

It might have escaped your notice, Mr Wilkins-Oppler, but the supply chain had already begun to break down. Think what would have happened had Dover become inoperable for weeks rather than days.

The UK is in a very vunerable position and it would require little more than a computer glitch to cause widespread disruption to the supply chain. We came close to starvation during the war because of the U-boat blockade and it was only strict rationing that saved the country from defeat.

This happened before we began covering the countryside with housing. We live on a small island with finite resources and starvation is a very real threat.

Christopher L Newcombe, Newchurch

Carter's biased table

KCC leader Cllr Paul Carter's table of salary comparators is misleading and biased (Letters, last week). Can he substantiate the source of his figures? Did KCC CEO's salary rise from £28K to £104K to £214K to boost his final salary pension. What is the value of a £214K pension pot?

Cllr Carter may have forgotten that carpenters, shop workers and private sector commuters do not get salaries or perks like heads of service; ie, all manner of incentives, car allowances, moving expenses, attendance allowances and the extortionate cost of final salary pensions. What about one per cent annual extra bonus revealed in last week's letter to KoS?

Unpaid carers of elderly/sick relatives, who are screened for 'assessments' that rarely lead to practical or monetary help are victims of bureaucracy. Malnutrition, debt, and hardship haunt the low-paid and business-owners struggling to keep up with inflated bills.

We cannot afford the anachronism that county and local councils have become, wasting our money on non-essentials. If council chiefs and committees had been made redundant in 1979 we would not be paying their outrageous pensions. The cost savings would have been better used to look after the working population and to give every taxpayer equitable pensions.

Rita Grootendorst, By email

Selective statistics

Perhaps Paul Carter might spend his time more usefully rather than producing selective statistics appearing to prove his assertions regarding pay for senior council staff.

For instance, trying to recoup our £50 million from Icelandic banks.What of the £7m-£10m frittered on a coastal art gallery?

Millions have been spent on road schemes in Medway and Ashford which have resulted in a massive increase in carbon footprint, as it takes much longer to get anywhere.

The overspend on Ashford's Stour Centre was another disgrace.

Most people are not consumed by envy, as alleged by Cllr Carter. What they want is value for money and not gross overstaffing at senior levels. I am sure huge savings are available without cutting frontline services.

John Hardy, Mersham

If I had a hammer …

I am writing in response to the nonsense concocted by Cllr Paul Carter, leader of KCC, on behalf of the long-suffering senior officers and executives cloistered within local government.

Where does he get his so-called facts from? Let's just consider one of his 'facts'.

Carpenters' salaries have risen 10 fold in 30 years. Which carpenters are these? Are these carpenters employed in the private sector where wages are subject to the irresistable laws of the market, not determined by some absurd pseudo-Marxist concept of 'comparative wage justice' that seems to the basis of Cllr Carter's whingeing.

Or are they public sector carpenters who all earn exactly £40k whether they are good or bad, skilled or unskilled, experienced or apprenticed?

Is this £40k figure an average or median figure for carpenters, implying that some carpenters might be earning as much as £70-80k per annum?

If so, Cllr Carter would be well advised to suggest to his hard-pressed coterie of executives that they retrain as carpenters and thus earn themselves a honest day's wage instead of bleating.

Why pick on tradesmen? How do they represent the 'average'? How is their pension provision? How many conferences in delightful locations do they attend each year?

To what business expense claims, travel allowances are they entitled? How many weeks' holiday do they get? What happens when they are sick or injured?

All Cllr Carter has demonstrated is that it is impossible to price and cost public sector services in the absence of a competitive market. Therefore, it is imperative to minimise the role of the state in the provision of such services in order to maximise the efficiency of an economy.

Cllr Carter could set a good example and start to claw back the recent inexorable growth of the public sector by making those responsible for throwing taxpayers' funds down an Icelandic geyser seek employment more suited to their talents.

Gareth Davies, Canterbury

Testing to destruction

Paul Browne (Letters, last week) misleadingly quotes that treatment for Parkinson's disease was found due to experiments on monkeys, when in fact it was discovered in human volunteers suffering from

Letters continue on next page

Parkinson's. Also, 25 years and millions spent on Aids research on monkeys has not produced a cure.

In light of the large numbers of serious and adverse drug reactions reported in the press recently, I am also surprised that the Government has never commissioned or evaluated any formal research on the efficacy of animal experiments, and has no plans to do so.

Many MPs and, in a recent survey, 83 per cent of general practitioners believe this is intolerable and are calling on the Government to carry out the scientific evaluation of animal testing – which will make an important contribution towards safeguarding human health and safety as well as saving countless human lives.

I urge people to write to their MPs and call upon the Government to carry out an independent and transparent scientific evaluation of the use of animals as surrogate humans in drug testing and research.

G Collins, Canterbury

Offensive reporting

Last week, KoS published as its exclusive front page lead a story headlined: Convicts' nice little earner on day release. The subheading reads: Killer spills beans on inmates who re-offend after being freed from jail for rehabilitation.

The story alleged prisoners at HMP Blantyre House were carrying out criminal activity while on day release and that some prisoners were involved in crime rings.

The alleged source for this report and comments which have been attributed to me is an article I wrote for a national prisoners' newspaper in which I highlighted personal concerns in relation to prisoners like myself undertaking approved day release with minimal funds.

I wish to clarify matters so your readers are in no doubt about the reality of life at Blantyre House and to put its current status in proper context. There has been no encouragement or coercion from prison managers that I should reply to your story.

All prisoners coming to Blantyre House would have been risk-assessed prior to transfer. Those assessments are on-going, so there is a progression to an acceptable risk status before any prisoner is permitted day absences.

I have undertaken more than 1,000 daily absences since June, 2005, in preparation for my eventual release and all have been strictly monitored.

Blantyre House does not house sex offenders, arsonists or those who have convictions for harassment offences, and certainly does not accept those who have been involved in terrorism.

Blantyre House has a 20-year history as a resettlement prison, one of only three resettlement prisons in the country, with a unique regime that places trust and responsibility on each prisoner so he leaves better prepared for life than might otherwise be the case.

All the work necessary for him to desist from future criminal activity is realised through a structured plan and targets each prisoner is expected to achieve.

Unlike almost all other prisons, Blantyre House does not experience a revolving-door of re-offending, which would be a waste of both money and time.

There have been instances where offenders have let the side down and re-offended on day release, but they are few and far between. In the four years I have been at Blantyre House there has been less than a handful, which is an excellent testimony to the work done here.

There have been no escapes of those yet to be permitted day absences, and this group of prisoners will always remain in relatively secure conditions until the approval for day release has been subjected to vigorous risk assessments.

KoS appears to suggest prisoners at Blantyre House are active in criminal activity and goes on to cite examples of how it is a "nice little earner". Readers were told it was me who was alleging this, and that the source was the article I wrote for the prisoners' newspaper.

I should like to make it clear that the examples I gave are historic, some from as much as 10 years ago, and certainly do not apply to the current situation at Blantyre House, or to the present management.

Moreover, as part of the restructure of Blantyre House, and in accordance with Ministry of Justice policy, the new management team has been appointed to oversee some of the changes, which in the event will mean a restructure as the recession takes hold, but will not change the policy of taking low-risk offenders.

Blantyre House has for many years enjoyed a good relationship with the community, which sees many offenders engaging in voluntary and community work, some whom do go on to undertake paid employment with charitable trusts after release.

Blantyre House is a prison and houses those convicted of offences and there will always be people who abuse trust placed in them (this is equally true for the rest of society).

This can cause adverse effects for the rest of the prisoners, but it is a rare occurrence – and thankfully so.

My article for the national prisoners' newspaper, Inside Time, centred on my own concerns about the lack of funds available to those going out on day absences, which I thought was a valid point, and went on to argue that it was reasonable to suggest that some offenders without money might re-offend.

Greg Clarke, the local MP, was reported as saying he had no sympathy. Neither does the prison management, whose response to my complaint was: "If you haven't got it, don't go."

I am the first to acknowledge there are those who are more affluent than others and we do have a creeping unemployment rate.

And, in any event, who should concern themselves about a 'whingeing prisoner' – which is an absolutely fair comment, but not one which would find acceptance with inmates generally who will one day be released from prison, who really do want to turn their lives around.

I wanted to raise a point, back in February, about the lack of funds for the purposes outlined and did so through the medium of the prisoners' newspaper.

I regret that your report attributes to me statements I never made. To the best of my knowledge, there are no active day release offenders at Blantyre House today – and if there were they would quickly be identified and removed to a closed prison.

Your report about offenders who abused the trust placed in them five to 10 years ago – and is therefore historic – does not reflect the current situation at Blantyre House.

Charles Hanson,
HMP Blantyre House,
Cranbrook

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Student is simply first (in her) class

A YOUNG mother has been named best tourism management student for last year by Canterbury council.

Jennifer Macgregor, 21, from Ashford, received the award as well as a cheque for £200 at Canterbury Christ Church University's North Holmes Campus.

AWARD: Jennifer

She graduated with a first-class degree in tourism management in November, 2008, and is now working for an accountancy firm.

Jennifer said: "I am thrilled to have achieved the highest mark in my class and winning this prize is not only a wonderful acknowledgement of all my hard work, but also a fantastic addition to my CV.

"I would like to thank all the tourism staff for their help and support as I couldn't have done it without them."

Young speaks up

THE Apprentice runner-up Claire Young was among speakers at a learning and development conference attended by students from West Kent College.

The conference was organised by the Medway NHS Trust, which has teamed up with the college to deliver a range of NVQs including health and social care, hospitality and catering and business administration.

Leah Buckingham-Warner, of West Kent College, said: "It was great to speak to so many employees who were interested in the training we could offer. We are looking forward to continuing training staff at Medway NHS."

National competition proves that young are developing into great generation of builders

By STEVE KNIGHT
steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

STUDENTS from across Kent battled it out for supremacy at a national building competition.

The 2009 Student Challenge final, organised by the Chartered Institute of Building, required entrants to act as land developers working to identify a suitable plot of land for an old people's home to be built on.

Mid Kent College was among those that made it through to the last stage, which involved its students taking part in a series of challenging exercises that included producing a detailed written report on the factors required to make a site suitable.

They also had to give a 10-minute presentation to industry experts that covered recommendations for the proposed project.

One of the judges at the London final, was the development manager of retirement home builders McCarthy & Stone, Tim Gilby.

He said: "I was very impressed with the standard of the competing teams. The subject matter was unfamiliar to them and the raw nature of the real-life site data provided had not been modified to ease their task.

"Nevertheless, their analysis and teamwork generated numerous points of key relevance that practitioners in this field deal with daily.

"Consequently, and at very short notice, the candidates produced high-quality submissions and presentations demonstrating a very good grasp of the principal issues.

"This bodes well for the forthcoming generation of building professionals."

Other teams to reach the final included the colleges of Inverness and Sunderland and the universities of Huddersfield, Anglia Ruskin and Birmingham, as well as the Carlow Institute of Technology and Coleg Sir Gar from Wales.

A number of qualifying heats were also held around the country, with students from North West Kent College clinching both second and third place in the London stage.

Their task involved managing and costing a construction project, with first prize going to University College London.

Steve Ramshaw, associate head of school construction at North West Kent College, said: "Our students can feel proud that within the first year of their studies they have managed to obtain such good results.

"They gave up a lot of their valuable time and produced a good effort on the day."

The college's site management programme currently runs on a Thursday afternoon and evening. Call Mr Ramshaw on 01322 629753 or email stephenramshaw@nwkcollege.ac.uk.

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Pupils have fun at science day

YOUNG scientists from 15 Kent schools took part in a day of fun-filled activities at the Salters' Festival of Chemistry.

Teams consisting of four 11 to 13-year-olds battled it out in a series of competitions at the event, which was held at the School of Physical Sciences at the University of Kent.

Organic chemistry lecturer Dr Stefano Biagini said: "The Salters' Festival is a great annual event that showcases how much fun science can be and how central it is to our everyday lives.

"This year the pupils had to investigate a crime using their chemistry knowledge and their forensic skills and were judged on their final reports and on their abilities in the lab."

Three-in-one course on life at university

CANTERBURY Christ Church University has joined forces with Year One Consulting to offer young people the opportunity to experience university life.

The programme, entitled '3y1y', aimed to give pupils an experience of three years of university life in one year, with students participating in a number of events including seminars, talks and campus tours.

Three separate events made up the programme that took place over the course of a year looking at going to and getting the most out of university, and focusing on it as a way of preparing for work.

The third and final event of the programme has seen pupils from Astor College for the Arts, Walmer Science College and Castle Community College introduced to life at Canterbury Christ Church University's Broadstairs Campus.

The programme also saw the students learning about taking their first steps into the workplace after graduating with advice from Tim le Lean of Year One Consulting.

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- ✔ Free use of resource centre
- ✔ An out-of-hours service

Even if you can only spare one day a week we would love to hear from you.

To find out more information and to register with us, please call us free on:
0800 731 6871
or e-mail
jean.read@capita.co.uk

CAPITA EDUCATION RESOURCING (Agy)

Committed to equal opportunities

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Career Opportunities

Canterbury College

Canterbury College is an equal opportunities employer

Canterbury College is a Further and Higher Education College in the heart of Kent. Our goal is to be one of the best FE Colleges in England by 2010. We have 9,000 students across 300 courses and enjoy an enviable reputation as a great place to learn. Our brand new £50M Campus is also home to nearly 800 staff and we have some great career opportunities which may be right for you.

Section Manager Construction Craft — ***08/12***
37 hrs per week, salary starting at £33,858 per annum

Lecturer Animal Care and Horse Studies — ***02/59***
37 hrs per week, salary range £18,387 – £26,363 per annum

Supply Lecturer Counselling — ***S/COU***
Various hours available, salary range £18,387 – £26,363 pro rata per annum

Supply Lecturer Higher Education - Fine Art — ***S/HE/FA***
Various hours available, salary range £18,387 – £26,363 pro rata per annum

Trainer Demonstrator Fabrication and Welding — ***TD3***
37 hrs per week, salary starting from £18,963 per annum

For an information pack please visit www.canterburycollege.ac.uk or call the Human Resources Office on 01227 811282 (24 hr answerphone) quoting the above reference.

Staff benefits include:

- ***Pension & Life Assurance Scheme***
- ***Proximity to main bus & train stations***
- ***Close to City Centre***
- ***Sports Hall & Gym***
- ***Generous Holiday Allowance***
- ***Staff Discount Scheme***

POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The closing date for the above posts is Monday 11th May 2009 at 12 noon

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European Social Fund
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CLICK
www.canterburycollege.ac.uk/job-vacancies

CALL
01227 811282 (24 hr answerphone)

Creative, committed, enthusiastic and resilient

TEACHERS

do amazing things at

BRADSTOW SCHOOL

34 Dumpton Park Drive
Broadstairs, Kent
CT10 1BY

All appointments are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure CRB check

All shortlisted applicants will be expected to visit the school before interview.

Bradstow School is an equal opportunities employer

In addition to salary, the benefits package includes Benenden membership.

If you would like to join them from **September 2009 to August 2010**, we are confident that:-
- It will probably be the hardest teaching job you will ever have.
- It will certainly be the most satisfying.

Bradstow is an exciting and unique residential school for children between the ages of 5 & 19, set in 13 acres of parkland just a few hundred metres from the sandy beaches of Broadstairs. We seek to meet the needs of children with autism and severe learning difficulties, many of whom have associated challenging behaviours. We have achieved national recognition for our developments in Communication and Behaviour Management.

Professional and personal qualities in this specialised and challenging field are very important. Experience, whilst helpful is not essential. Extensive and on-going training and support of all staff is at the core of the success of the school. All teachers are fully trained and supported in TEACCH, Prospect, PECS and other Augmentative Communication Systems as well as being provided with other specialist skills. You will also be supported and encouraged to further develop your skills and knowledge by undertaking further Degree and Diploma studies.

OFSTED 2009 said,
"Bradstow is an outstanding school"
"The curriculum and the quality of teaching and support are exceptional"
"It is to the tremendous credit of a highly skilled and well-qualified team of teachers and support staff that they enable pupils to overcome and cope with the substantial learning and emotional barriers that they face"
"Bradstow is a very complex organization and a centre of excellence in its own field"

If you would like to join our team, and help us to continue to transform the lives of these children and their families, give us a call. Be in no doubt, this is a challenging working environment for which you will need to be committed to the needs of the child and the school. In return we offer a highly rewarding and satisfying career, with quite a bit of fun thrown in as well!

For SEN specialists, the second SEN point will be available.

For an application form and information pack please call
01843 608727 (24 hour recruitment answer machine), or email
personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk.

Please note that CV's will not be considered.

Applications should be received no later than 12 noon, 8th May 2009.

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

MidKent College

MidKent College based in the Medway Towns and Maidstone is seeking to appoint outstanding individuals in the following areas:

Learning Resource Centre Assistant — Ref: P0282

37 hours per week, 40 weeks per year
Salary: £9,939 - £17,750 pro rata

We are looking for an enthusiastic candidate to assist the efficient running of the Learning Resource Centre, ensuring the delivery of high quality, customer focused, easily accessible services to all users. The successful candidate will be responsible for Library administrative and organisational duties and have good communication and IT skills.

Lecturer in Hair Design — Ref: P0342

22 hours per week
Salary: £25,895 - £29,622 pro rata

We have an exciting opportunity to recruit a passionate individual to teach assess and contribute to the development of Hair Design programmes. The applicant must have a relevant vocational/academic qualification and should hold or be willing to work towards a teaching qualification. Recent industry experience would be advantageous.

Technician in Beauty — Ref: P0277

Salary: £11,479 - £17,750

The College is looking to recruit a highly motivated individual to provide guidance and support to learners and assist with the running of various Clinics. You will be able to demonstrate good organisational and communication skills and relevant experience within the beauty industry would be advantageous.

Administrative Apprentice — Ref: P0594

Salary: £6,171

As a member of the Business Development Team you will provide administrative support to the College stakeholders. The successful candidate will develop competencies to meet NVQ Level 2 Standards of performance.

Hourly Paid Lecturer in Plumbing and Heating — Ref: SE004

£20.37 - £28.67 per hour

An opportunity has arisen within the Construction and Engineering Department for a Lecturer to contribute to the delivery and development of Level 3 Plumbing, Heating and Gas Programmes. The successful candidate will have current knowledge of the Building Engineering Industry and a recognised teaching qualification or be willing to work towards one; an Assessors qualification would be advantageous.

Hourly Paid Lecturer in Business — Ref: SE005

£20.37 - £28.67 per hour

We are looking for an enthusiastic individual to teach BTEC National and First Diploma Business programmes. The successful candidate will hold or be willing to work towards a recognised teaching qualification and be able to deliver Key Skills to a level 2 standard.

Hourly Paid Lecturer in Healthcare — Ref: SE007

£20.37 - £28.67 per hour

The post holder will be involved in the delivery of Healthcare programmes. The successful candidate will have proven knowledge and experience within Healthcare environments and hold or be willing to work towards a recognised teaching qualification.

Hourly Paid Lecturer in Public Services — Ref: SE008

£20.37 - £28.67 per hour

We are seeking an enthusiastic Lecturer to teach a range of BTEC and school links programmes. The successful candidate will have relevant experience within Public Services and hold or be willing to work towards a teaching qualification.

Hourly Paid Lecturer in IT — Ref: SE006

£20.37 - £28.67 per hour

The College is looking to recruit a passionate individual to teach BTEC National and First Diploma IT programmes. The successful candidate will have or be willing to work towards a recognised teaching qualification and be able to deliver Key Skills to a level 2 standard.

Hourly Paid Lecturer in Childcare — Ref: SE009

£20.37 - £28.67 per hour

We are looking to recruit an individual to deliver and teach Childcare programmes. The successful candidate will have proven knowledge and experience within Childcare environments and hold or be willing to work towards a recognised teaching qualification.

Closing date: Friday 15 May 2009

Mid-Kent College is working in partnership with RBLI Employment Solutions to support individuals who have a disability or health condition in the application, interview and employment with the college. If you would like any further information regarding RBLI, or require assistance with your application process then please contact RBLI on 0800 783 1144 or visit their website www.rbli.co.uk for information, advice and guidance.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of employment is subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check in accordance with the College procedure.

Application forms and further details are available from www.midkent.ac.uk. Alternatively, please e-mail job.applications@midkent.ac.uk. For individuals without access to e-mail or the internet please call the Personnel department on 01634 884402 (24 hour answer machine). In all communication with the College please quote the appropriate job title and reference number.

Mid-Kent College is an equal opportunities employer

Action for Business College · POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE · RBLI · INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Saint George's Church of England School

Meadow Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 7LS
Tel: 01474 533082
Fax: 01474 533844
HEADTEACHER: Mrs A Southgate BDAKC
Church of England, Voluntary Aided, Humanities College
11-18, Mixed, Comprehensive School

TEACHER OF SCIENCE

Required for September 2009 – Main Pay Scale

We require a well-qualified, enthusiastic and innovative teacher of science who is committed to raising the achievement of our students.
Saint George's C of E School is a successful, innovative and over -subscribed comprehensive school. This post comes at an exciting time for the school as we are preparing for new buildings under Wave 4 of BSF.
Contact us to request further details and an application form.
Email dhariwalj@saintgeorgescofe.kent.sch.uk or visit our website
www.saintgeorgescofe.kent.sch.uk
Closing Date : 8 May 2009

Saint George's Church of England School

Meadow Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 7LS
Tel: 01474 533082
Fax: 01474 533844
HEADTEACHER: Mrs A Southgate BDAKC
Church of England, Voluntary Aided, Humanities College
11-18, Mixed, Comprehensive School

PRINCIPAL TEACHER OF MATHEMATICS

Required for September 2009
TLR1 (£8,975)

Following the promotion of the current post holder we wish to appoint an excellent classroom practitioner to inspire and lead our mathematics team. You will have the enthusiasm and energy to drive the development of effective teaching and learning for the 21st century.

TEACHER OF MATHEMATICS

Required for September 2009
Main Pay Scale

We are looking for a well-qualified and innovative mathematician.
Saint George's C of E School is a successful, innovative and over -subscribed comprehensive school. These posts come at an exciting time for the school as we are preparing for new buildings under Wave 4 of BSF.
Contact us to request further details and an application form.
Email dhariwalj@saintgeorgescofe.kent.sch.uk or visit our website
www.saintgeorgescofe.kent.sch.uk
Closing Date: 8 May 2009

WEST HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

DARTFORD ROAD, DARTFORD, KENT DA1 3DZ
TEL: 01322 226019 FAX: 01322 220121
E.mail: office@west-hill.kent.sch.uk
Age range: 5-11 N.O.R. 490
Headteacher: Mrs Pauline Hindle

Do you wish to join a lively talented and friendly staff?

Post 1

REQUIRED FOR SEPTEMBER 2009 A KS1 OR LOWER KS2 TEACHER

We are seeking to appoint an enthusiastic teacher to work in KS1 or Year 3 or Year 4. This position would be suitable for experienced teachers and NQT's. Applicants are asked to identify curriculum areas in which they can offer expertise. The school has a commitment to the professional development of staff.

Post 2

TEMPORARY POSITION REQUIRED FROM SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2009 A 0.4 FTE UPPER KS2 TEACHER (WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF THIS BEING EXTENDED)

A teacher to release the deputy head for 2 days each week. The successful applicant must be committed to high expectations, have a thorough knowledge of the National Curriculum and the Year 6 curriculum. Applicants must be committed to fully contribute to the life of the school.
West Hill is a successful and popular school with well behaved and motivated children. At the heart of the school's philosophy is the development of the whole child.
If you would like to learn more about the school please send for an information pack. Visits to the school are warmly welcomed.
Completed application forms should be forwarded to the headteacher by 8th May 2009.

To advertise in this section
01303 817040

Maidstone Mediation - charity no 1052104

WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

We are looking to recruit a
VICTIM LIAISON OFFICER
to work within the Folkestone Youth Offending Team helping victims of crime access Restorative Justice processes.

Starting salary **19,500pa**
– Own car essential (mileage allowance paid)

The post holder will need to have good communication and IT skills. Training will be provided.

For an application pack please email
mediationscheme@btconnect.com

Abbey Court School

"WE GROW PEOPLE"

Abbey Court School provides a stimulating, challenging and safe learning environment where pupils and staff efforts, work and achievement are celebrated.

We are currently looking for a

TEACHER FOR PUPILS WITH SEVERE AND PROFOUND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES TO COMMENCE SEPT 2009

MPS + 2 SEN Points + TLR 2C (with previous experience) £2422

The school is located in pleasant surroundings and we have educational resources of enviable proportions. This post would suit newly qualified teachers or those wishing to gain further experience of SEN. Comprehensive induction and training will be provided.

Telephone enquiries and informal visits to the school welcomed

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

Closing Date: 8th May 2009

For further details and a job description, please contact Linda Taylor, Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3SP. (Tel: 01634 338224), stating the position for which you are applying.

Rainham School for Girls

(A Specialist Technology College & Training School)
Derwent Way, Rainham, GILLINGHAM Kent ME8 0BX
(NOR 1570) Head Teacher: Mrs J Dunn

2 i/c Science Faculty - TLR 2a (currently £5,920)

We are seeking to appoint a well qualified and experienced teacher with good interpersonal, leadership and management skills to join the school in September 2009 as Second in Charge of the Science Faculty. The successful candidate will have high expectations of student achievement and proven excellence in classroom practice. Experience of teaching at KS5 is desirable to support expansion in this key stage.

Rainham School for Girls is a popular and successful non-selective school offering excellent opportunities for enthusiastic and ambitious applicants to contribute to its continuing development.

Any offer of employment for this post will be subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure.

This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Application forms and further details are available from Mrs D Francis, Personnel Officer at the School.

Tel. 01634 362746, Fax: 01634 388334. Email: dfrancis@rsg.org.uk

Closing date: Monday, 11th May 2009

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THE KING'S SCHOOL CANTERBURY

Part-time Gardener

Required to work 20 hours per week at our Junior School in Sturry, Canterbury

There is a possibility that this post could become full-time in the future.

The King's School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Criminal Records Bureau.

For an application form, please email the School's Personnel Department on recruitment@kings-bursary.co.uk or telephone on 01227 595655 (24 hour answerphone)

Closing date for receipt of completed application forms: 7th May 2009

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GRAVESEND ASHFORD
RUN BY TEACHERS FOR TEACHERS
0845 130 4586
www.link-education.co.uk
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JobsforKent.co.uk

Accountancy

Become Book Keeper
Whitstable
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Sellwell Events
Quoting Job Ref: KOS BAB
Tel: 01227 774808
Email sell.well@mail.com

Administration, Secretarial, PA

Administrator/Coordinator
Sevenoaks
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: 1 May 2009
To apply/more information: Sevenoaks District Partnership
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 07941 388852
Email Rob@SevenoaksDPG.co.uk

Agriculture, Forestry, Environment

Gardener
Canterbury
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Kings School
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01227 595655
Email recruitment@kings-bursary.co.uk

Catering, Hospitality

Coffee Shop Assistants
Canterbury
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: C & H Fabrics
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01227 459760
Email applications@jobsforkent.co.uk

Restaurant Manager
Hythe
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Hythe Bay Fish Restaurant and Bar
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01233 213000
Email stephentaylor@eastwellmanor.co.uk

Waitresses
Faversham
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Martins Restaurant
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01227 750304
Email applications@jobsforkent.co.uk

Sous Chef
Ashford
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Chart Hills Golf Club
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01580 292222
Email kitchen@charthills.co.uk

Chef to Partie
Ashford
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Chart Hills Golf Club
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01580 292222
Email kitchen@charthills.co.uk

Cook
Maidstone
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Age Concern Maidstone
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01622 753618
Email info@ageconcernmaidstone.org.uk

Child Care

Foster Carers
Ashford
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Caldecott Foundation
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01303 815648
Email fostering@caldecottfoundation.co.uk

Community Worker
Canterbury
Salary: £18,226 pro rata
To apply/more information: Home-Start Canterbury & Coastal
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01227 472050
Email Office@homestartcanterbury.org

Customer Service, Call Centre

Customer Service Agents
Folkestone
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: 30 April 2009
To apply/more information: Saga
Quoting Job Ref: SG292/KOS
Tel: 01303 774888
Email human.resources@saga.co.uk

CUSTOMER SERVICES REPRESENTATIVES
Sittingbourne
Salary: £12,000 pa
Closing Date: 4 May 2009
To apply/more information: Dovetail Services
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Email julie.ralfe@dovetailservices.com

Education, Teacher, School

Subject Lead Learner - Mathematics (We employ two subject Lead Learners in our core subjects)
Aylesford
Salary: TLR 2B
Closing Date: 11/05/2009
To apply/more information: Jill.Mckenna Aylesford School - Sports College
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01622 717341
Email jill.mckenna @aylesford.kent.sch.uk

Teacher of Maths
Aylesford
Salary: MPS
Closing Date: 11/05/2009
To apply/more information: Jill McKenna Aylesford School - Sports College
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01622 717341
Email jill.mckenna@laylesford.kent.sch.uk

Teacher of Physical Education
Aylesford
Salary: MPS
Closing Date: 11/05/2009
To apply/more information: Jill McKenna Aylesford School - Sports College
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01622 717341
Email jill.mckenna@aylesford.kent.sch.uk

Teacher of Science
Aylesford
Salary: MPS
Closing Date: 11/05/2009
To apply/more information: Jill McKenna Aylesford School - Sports College
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01622 717341
Email jill.mckenna@aylesford.kent.sch.uk

Section Manager - Construction Craft
Canterbury
Salary: £33,858 pa
Closing Date: Monday 11 May at 12 Noon
To apply/more information: Canterbury College
Quoting Job Ref: 08/12
Tel: 01227 811282
Email applications@jobsforkent.co.uk

Teaching Assistant
Thanet
Salary: Kent Scheme Payscale 3
Closing Date: Tuesday 28th April 2009
To apply/more information: Ursuline College
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01843 834431
Email info1@ursuline.kent.sch.uk

Manager – County Youth Choirs
Maidstone
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: 1 May 2009
To apply/more information: Denise Milne Kent Music School
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01622 358435
Email dmilne@kent-music.com

Teacher for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties
Rochester
Salary: See Below
To apply/more information: Abbey Court School
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01634 338224
Email tayll036@medway.org.uk

TEACHERS
Broadstairs
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: 12 Noon 8th May 2009
To apply/more information: Bradstow School
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01843 608727
Email personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk

TEACHER OF ENGLISH
Sandwich
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: Friday 8 May 2009
To apply/more information: Sandwich Technology School
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01304 610013
Email stella.leitner@sandwich-tech.kent.sch.uk

TEACHER OF SCIENCE
Gravesend
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: 8 May 2009
To apply/more information: St George's CoE School
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Email dhariwalj@saintgeorgescofe.kent.sch.uk

PRINCIPAL TEACHER OF MATHEMATICS
Gravesend
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: 8 May 2009
To apply/more information: St George's CoE School
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Email dhariwalj@saintgeorgescofe.kent.sch.uk

TEACHER OF MATHEMATICS
Gravesend
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: 8 May 2009
To apply/more information: St George's CoE School
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Email dhariwalj@saintgeorgescofe.kent.sch.uk

2 i/c Science Faculty
Gillingham
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: Monday 11 May 2009
To apply/more information: Rainham School for Girls
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01634 362746
Email dfrancis@rsg.org.uk

TEACHER OF ART
Deal
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: 8 May 2009
To apply/more information: Walmer Science College
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01304 375212
Email admin@walmersciencecollege.co.uk

KS1 or LOWER KS2 TEACHER
Dartford
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: 8 May 2009
To apply/more information: West Hill Primary School
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01322 226019
Email office@west-hill.kent.sch.uk

UPPER KS2 TEACHER
Dartford
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: 8 May 2009
To apply/more information: West Hill Primary School
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01322 226019
Email office@west-hill.kent.sch.uk

Engineering, Manufacturing, Utilities

Domestic Appliance Engineer
Ashford
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Mr Pluckrose Ashbridge Domestic Appliances
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Email applications@jobsforkent.co.uk

Estimator
Gillingham
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Aerospace Tooling
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01634 233216
Email applications@jobsforkent.co.uk

Design Manager
Gillingham
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Aerospace Tooling
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01634 233216
Email A.daintree@aerospace-tooling.co.uk

Design Engineers
Gillingham
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Aerospace Tooling
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01634 233216
Email A.daintree@aerospace-tooling.co.uk

Estate Agency, Property

Estate Agents
Whitstable
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Kent Estate Agencies
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 0845 463 2896
Email info@kea.org.uk

Management, Senior Positions

BRANCH MANAGEMENT STAFF
Ashford
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: 28th April 2009
To apply/more information: SC Motor Factors Ltd
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 0208 3086812
Email humanresources@scmf.co.uk

Commercial Manager
Gillingham
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Aerospace Tooling
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01634 233216
Email A.daintree@aerospace-tooling.co.uk

Marketing, Advertising

e-Commerce Marketing Executive
Dover
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: 1 May 2009
To apply/more information: SeaFrance
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Email recruitment@seafrance.fr

Nursing, Medicine, Care Work

Foster Carers
Sittingbourne
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Bene Care
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01227 362510
Email info@benecarefostering.co.uk

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To advertise in this section or online
01303 817040

Community Drug Workers
Kent
Salary: £21,306 - £27,573 pa
Closing Date: 1 May 2009
To apply/more information: KCA (UK)
Quoting Job Ref: 560
Tel: 01795 590635
Email recruitment@kca.org.uk

RGN/SEN Footnurses
Maidstone
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Age Concern Maidstone
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01622 753618
Email info@ageconcernmaidstone.org.uk

VICTIM LIAISON OFFICER
Folkestone
Salary: £19,500 pa
To apply/more information: Maidstone Mediation
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Email mediationscheme@btconnect.com

Retail, Wholesale, Sales

Sales Manager
Gillingham
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Aerospace Tooling
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01634 233216
Email A.daintree@aerospace-tooling.co.uk

PUBLIC NOTICES

The Insolvency Act 1986
MOW & TRIM LANDSCAPES LIMITED
Company Number 5829429

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to Section 98 of the Insolvency Act 1986 that a meeting of the creditors of the above-named Company will be held at Hilton Hotel, Bearsted Road, Weavering, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 5AA, on 8 May 2009, at 2.30 pm for the purposes mentioned in Sections 99 to 101 of the said Act.

Creditors wishing to vote at the meeting must lodge their proxy, together with a statement of their claim at the offices of RJC Financial Management, Hayes House, 6 Hayes Road, Bromley, Kent, BR2 9AA, not later than 12 noon on the day prior to the meeting.

A list of names and addresses of the company's creditors will be available for inspection free of charge at the offices of RJC Financial Management, Hayes House, 6 Hayes Road, Bromley, Kent, BR2 9AA on the two business days immediately preceding the meeting between the hours of 10.00 am and 4.00 pm.

Dated: 21 April 2009
By Order of the Board
Brian Goodman, Director

The Classic Papers Limited Pension Fund and Life Assurance Scheme

PURSUANT TO SECTION 27 OF THE TRUSTEE ACT 1925

The Classic Papers Limited Pension Fund and Life Assurance Scheme (the Scheme) was established with effect from 6 April 1988. On 16 January 2008 Alexander Forbes Trustee Services Limited of Registered Office, 6 Bevis Marks, London, EC3A 7AF was appointed as sole Trustee of the Scheme. Further to the termination of the liability to contribute to the Scheme by the Principal Employer, Premier Paper Group Limited (03672117), and in accordance with the Scheme Rules, the Scheme started to wind-up on 20 March 2009.

Alexander Forbes Trustee Services Limited has corresponded by post with all known members of the Scheme. Accordingly, it is of vital importance that any person having a claim against or an interest in the scheme, including any person who may have been employed by the company or an associated employer on a part time basis and who considers that his or her exclusion from the Scheme may have constituted indirect discrimination, who has not received correspondence from us should make themselves known to the Trustees of the Scheme.

Particulars of any claim should be sent in writing to the under mentioned contact on or before 25th June 2009, after which date Alexander Forbes Trustee Services Limited will proceed with the winding-up of the Scheme and distribution of the Scheme assets having regard only to the claims and interests of which it has had notice.

Particulars of any claim should be sent in writing to Mrs Gerry Fowler, Alexander Forbes Trustee Services Limited, 6th Floor, Market Square House, St James's Street, Nottingham, NG1 6FG.

Notification is not required from persons who are currently in receipt of a pension from the Scheme, or who have received correspondence relating to this scheme from Alexander Forbes Trustee Services Limited.

IN THE BOROUGH OF TONBRIDGE & MALLING

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL (OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES) (AMENDMENT NO 2) ORDER 2009

Notice is hereby given that Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council made an Order on 21st April 2009, under Sections 32 and 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, having obtained the consent of Kent County Council in accordance with Section 39(3) of the Act, and of all other enabling powers and after consultation with the Chief Officer of Police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 of the Act.

The effect of the Order will be to amend the Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (Off-street Parking Places) Order 2008, The Schedule PART 1, Table of Parking Places, by adding new parking places to the Order with associated tariffs as follows.

Names of Parking Places	Maximum period for which vehicles may wait and Charging period	Scale of charges
Group 14 River Walk	a Charging period 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday b Free Sunday and Public Holidays c Maximum stay 23 hours	**Pay and display charges** **Up to ½ Hour** £0.40 ½ to 1hr £0.80 1 to 2 hours £1.50 2 to 3 hours £2.10 3 to 6 hours £3.10 6 to 23 hours £4.50

A copy of the Order together with a map, a copy of the Order that will be amended by the Order and a Statement of the Council's Reasons for making the Order, may be inspected during normal office hours at the offices of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Kings Hill, West Malling or Tonbridge Castle until then.

Anyone wishing to question the validity of the Order, or of any of its provisions on the grounds that they are not within the powers conferred by the Act of 1984, as amended, or that any requirement of the Act of 1984, or any instrument made thereunder has not been complied with may, within six weeks from the date of the Order, make application for that purpose to the High Court. The Order will come into effect on 27th April 2009.

If you have any questions concerning the proposed Order or require further information please contact Sara Fletcher on 01732 876276 during normal office hours.

Steve Humphrey, Director of Planning Transport & Leisure Services

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACTS – NOTICES OF APPLICATIONS

The following applications have been submitted to the Council and are being advertised for the reason(s) given in each case.

TM/09/00792/FL & TM/09/00788/LB – The White House 169 Tonbridge Road Wateringbury Maidstone Kent ME18 5NU – Mr Gary Evans is applying for demolition of existing off the peg conservatory to rear, erection of orangery to house new kitchen in place of old conservatory, existing kitchen made into a utility room, existing porch upgraded, new ensuite to master bedroom, re-roofing using existing tiles, reconstruction like for like of existing dormers, and installation of solar panels and detached double car port and log store. Reason: LB CA

TM/09/00800/FL – Weald Granary Seven Mile Lane Mereworth Maidstone Kent ME18 5PZ – Weald Granary Ltd are applying for erection of 2no. 18 metre diameter silos and flatstore together with the raising of 27no. existing silos. Reason: GPI HA

TM/09/00777/FL & TM/09/00778/LB – Broadfield Farm House Old Soar Road Plaxtol Sevenoaks Kent TN15 0QX – Fairlawne Estate Co Ltd are applying for construction of new garden room to existing dwelling house. Reason: CA LB

Reasons for the case being publicised:
LB Application relates to/affects a Listed Building or its setting
CA Application is within/affects a Conservation Area
GPI Application is of general Public Interest
HA Site is over 1ha.

These applications are displayed on our website www.tmbc.gov.uk – click on the button "Do It Online" and follow the instructions for "Planning Applications" online. You can submit your comments by emailing to planning.applications@tmbc.gov.uk (please quote the application number by the date set out below).

Copies of applications listed may be seen during office hours (8.30 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday). Any applications within Hadlow, Hildenborough and Tonbridge are available at Tonbridge Castle, Tonbridge. Other applications are available at the office of the Director of Planning, Transport & Leisure, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4LZ. Any representations should be made in writing quoting the application number by 17 May 2009.

David Hughes
Chief Executive
26 April 2009

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Highways - Districts of Swale, Canterbury, Thanet, Dover, Ashford

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(VARIOUS ROADS IN THE DISTRICTS OF SWALE, CANTERBURY, THANET, DOVER & ASHFORD) (50 MPH SPEED LIMIT) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because highway maintenance works are proposed to be carried out, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting all traffic from travelling at any speed in excess of 50 mph on Various Roads in the districts of Swale, Canterbury, Thanet, Dover & Ashford as described in column 1 of the Schedule on or after 11 May 2009, as shown in column 3 of the Schedule, or until such works are complete.

THE SCHEDULE

Specified Road	Length of road affected	Programmed Dates
A299 Thanet Way (Swale, Canterbury & Thanet)	Full length from the Brenley Corner junction to the Mount Pleasant roundabout, Monkton	Phase 1: 11 May to 5 June 2009 Phase 2: 12 October to 6 November 2009
A28 Canterbury Road, Birchington (Thanet)	From the St Nicholas at Wade roundabout to the existing 40 mph limit prior to the junction with Seamark Road	Phase 1: 8 June to 9 June 2009 Phase 2: 9 November to 10 November 2009
A256 Whitfield Bypass, Whitfield (Dover)	From the junction with the A2 to the Dover Road roundabout	Phase 1: 10 June to 16 June 2009 Phase 2: 11 November to 17 November 2009
Lydden Hill, Lydden (Dover)	From the junction with the A2 to the junction with Swanton Lane	Phase 1: 17 June 2009 Phase 2: 18 November 2009
Romney Marsh Road, Ashford	Norman Road roundabout to Park Farm Estate roundabout	Phase 1: 18 June to 26 June 2009 Phase 2: 23 July to 31 July 2009.
A2042 Bad Munstereifel Road, Ashford	From junction with Romney Marsh Road to 'cloverleaf' junction with A2070	Phase 1: 18 June to 26 June 2009 Phase 2: 23 July to 31 July 2009
A20 Maidstone Road and Fougeres Way, Ashford	Between the junction with Sandyhurst Lane and junction 9 of the M20	Phase 1: 29 June to 30 June 2009 Phase 2: 3 August to 4 August 2009

This Order will come into force on 11 May 2009, will be in operation when the appropriate signs are in place, and will remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months.

The order will allow the above-mentioned restrictions to be implemented as and when required for works of a similar nature, at any time for the duration of the order.

Highways - District of Ashford

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(VARIOUS ROADS, ASHFORD) (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because Carriageway Surfacing works are proposed to be carried out, the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting traffic on various roads, Ashford from as described in column 1 of the schedule to this order on 30 April 2009 for an estimated period of as described in column 3 of the schedule to this order or until such works are complete.

The alternative route for through traffic will be via as described in column 2 of the schedule to this order.

The Affected Route	The Alternative Route	Date & Times of Road Closure
Denwood Street, Crundale From its junction with Upper Olantigh to Sole Street	Sole Street, Olantigh Road and Longport	Between 5 May and 12 May 2009 for two days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Wissenden Lane, Bethersden From its junction with Romden Road to School Road	Church Hill, Mill Road, Pluckley Road, Chambers Green Road, Smarden Road, Pluckley Road and Romden Road	Between 8 and 17 June 2009 for two days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Ram Lane, Hothfield From its junction with A20 to Little Chart Road	A20 Maidstone Road, Cade Road, School Road, West Street and Little Chart Road	Between 13 and 22 May 2009 for two days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Blackwall Road, Ashford From its junction with A2070 Kennington Road to Goodcheap Lane	Goodcheap Lane, Hinxhill Road, The Street and Kennington Road	Between 6 and 13 May 2009 for two days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Godinton Lane and Worten Lane Ashford From its junction with A20 to Etchden Road	Etchden Road, Bears Lane, Bethersden Road, The Street, School Road, Station Road and A20 Maidstone Road	Between 7 and 19 May 2009 for four days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Stalisfield Road, Charing From its junction with Faversham Road to Hart Hill	Hart Hill, A20 Maidstone Road, A252 Canterbury Road, Charing Hill and Faversham Road	Between 15 May and 27 June 2009 for three days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Green Hill Lane, Egerton From its junction with New Road and Munday Bois Road	Munday Bois Road, Rock Hill Road and New Road	Between 20 May and 29 May 2009 for two days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Water Lane, Smarden From its junction with High Street to Bell Lane	Bell Lane, Burnt House Lane, Pluckley Road and The Street	Between 22 May and 1 June 2009 for three days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Burnthouse Lane, Smarden From its junction with Bell Lane to The Cut	Bell lane, A274 Headcorn Road, Smarden Road and The Cut	Between 27 May and 2 June 2009 as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Elvey Lane, Pluckley For its entire length	No alternative diversion route	Between 27 May and 3 June 2009 for one day as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Sparrow Hatch, Bethersden From its junction with Bethersden Road to Dowle Street Road	Bethersden Road, Fridd Road, Pluckley Road, Station Road and Dowle Street Road	Between 28 May and 4 June 2009 for one day as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Bull Lane, Bethersden From its junction with A28 Ashford Road to Smarden Road	A28 Ashford Road, School Road, Wissenden Lane, Romden Road, Buckmans Green Lane, Bethersden Road and Smarden Road	Between 2 June and 11 June 2009 for five days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Wagstaff Lane, Biddenden From its junction with Omenden Lane to high Halden Road	Omenden Lane, Bethersden Road, Smarden Road, Pot Kiln Lane and High Halden Road	Between 3 and 18 June 2009 for two days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Thurstons Lane, High Halden From its junction with High Halden Lane to Shawlands Lane	High Halden lane, A262 Biddenden Road, A28 Ashford Road and Cripple Hill	Between 9 and 16 June 2009 for two day as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Bromley Green Road, Ruckinge From its junction Hamstreet Road to Capel Road	Hamstreet Road and Capel Road	Between 9 and 26 June 2009 for four days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Birchett Lane, Woodchurch Road, Coldblow and Spot House Lane, Orlestone From its junction with Hamstreet Road to Shadoxhurst Road	Hamstreet Road, Ashford Road, Warehorne Road B2067, Brook Street, Lower Road, Place Lane, Spot House Lane and Shadoxhurst Road	Between 17 June and 26 June 2009 for three days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Swain Road, Tenterden From its junction with Ingleden Road to B2067 Woodchurch Road	Swain Road, A28 Silver Hill, Ashford Road, B2080 Beacon Oak Road and B2067 Woodchurch Road	Between 22 June and 30 June 2009 for two days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Frogs Lane, Rolvenden From its junction with A28 Hastings Road to Maytham Road	A28 Hastings Road and Maytham Road	Between 24 June and 2 July 2009 for two days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Readers Bridge Road, Tenterden From its junction with Bugglesden Road to Grange Road	Bugglesden Road, A262 Biddenden Road, A28 Ashford Road, Shoreham Lane and Grange Road	Between 24 June and 30 June 2009 for two days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
B2080 Appledore Road, Tenterden From its junction with Woodchurch Road to Ebony Road	B2080 Reading Street, Tenterden Road, The Street, Station Road, Rhee Wall Road A2070, Ashford Road, Warehorne Road, Kenardington Road, Warehorne Road and Brook Street	Between 26 June and 7 July 2009 for three days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Acton Lane and Ebony Road, Isle of Oxney From its junction with Reading Street B2080 to Stocks Road B2082	Stocks Road, Wittersham Road, Catts Hill, Ferry Road, B2080 Tenterden Road and Reading Street	Between 1 July and 10 July for three days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Wittersham Road, Wittersham From its junction with Rye Road to Top Road	Rose Hill, Lower Road and Catts Hill	Between 6 and 10 July 2009 for one day as advised by the appropriate signage.
Catts Hill, Stone Cum Ebony From its junction with Church Road to Top Road	Church Road and Top Road	Between 3 and 17 July 2009 for two days as advised by the appropriate signage on site.
Knock Hill, Stone Cum Ebony From its junction with Military Road to Catts Hill	Military Road, The Street, B2080 Tenterden Road, Ferry Road, Appledore Road and Catts Hill	Between 8 and 14 July 2009 for one day as advised by the appropriate signage on site.

Highways - District of Canterbury

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(VARIOUS LEVEL CROSSINGS, CANTERBURY) (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because of track maintenance works on behalf of Network Rail, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Various Level Crossings, Canterbury, as described in columns 1 & 2 of the Schedule to this Order, from 11 May 2009 onwards, as shown in column 3 of the Schedule. Each closure will be for a distance of 20 metres from the level crossing, and pedestrian access may be affected.

The alternative routes for through traffic will be via as described in column 3 of the Schedule.

SCHEDULE

Specified Road	Alternative routes	Programmed date
Grove Ferry Hill and Grove Ferry Road, Chislet	Via Grove Ferry Road, Grove Road, Stourmouth Road, Preston Road, The Street, Ramsgate Road, Island Road, Grove Ferry Hill	From 11 May 2009 for 4 nights, between 11.00 pm and 6.00 am, ending Friday 15 May 2009 at 5.00 am. From 1.00 am 19 September 2009 until 4.00 am 21 September 2009
St Dunstan's Street, Canterbury	London Road, Rheims Way and St Peter's Place	2.00 am 17 May 2009 until 5.00 am 18 May 2009
Chartham Station, Station Road, Chartham	A28 Ashford Road, Shalmsford Street and Parish Road	2.00 am 7 June 2009 until 5.00 am 8 June 2009
Broad Oak Road and Shalloak Road, Canterbury Note suspension of 7.5-ton weight limit in Sweechgate and Shalloak Road	Via Broad Oak Road, Vauxhall Road, Sturry Road, Mill Road, Sturry Hill, Herne Bay Road, (for through traffic) Sweechgate and Shalloak Road	From 24 August 2009 for two nights from 11.00 pm until 6.00 am.

This Order will come into force from Monday 11 May 2009, will be in operation when the appropriate signs are erected, and will remain valid for a maximum period of eighteen months. The order will allow the above-mentioned restrictions to be implemented as and when required for works of a similar nature, at any time for the duration of the order.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(FAVERSHAM ROAD, WHITSTABLE) (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because of works to install ducts for EDF Energy, the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Faversham Road, Whitstable, between the Blue Anchor Public House and the junction with Lucerne Drive, on 27 April 2009, for an estimated period of 10 nights or until the works are complete. It is intended that the works will be carried out overnight between the hours of 7.00 pm and 7.00 am with the road re-opened outside these hours.

The alternative routes for through traffic will be: eastbound, via Faversham Road, Seasalter Road, Head Hill Road, Whitstable Road, A299 Thanet Way, A2990 Thanet Way, Borstal Hill and Joy Lane; westbound via Seasalter Lane, A299 on slip, A299 Thanet Way, Staple Street, Staple Street Road, Head Hill Road and Seasalter Road.

For further information, please contact Kent Highway Services, on 08458 247 800 (local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways

Kent Highway Services

Highways - Borough of Dartford

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
BROAD LANE, DARTFORD (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting the use by vehicular traffic on Broad Lane, Dartford between its junctions with Hook Green Road and Common Lane.

The Order will become effective on 11th May 2009, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months, the works are planned to last 5 days between 09:30 and15:30 and commence on 11th May 2009. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the route described above will be via: Hooks Green Lane, Leyton Cross Road, Oakfield Lane, Common Lane

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate access to carriageway box for the restoration of a BT service.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
GREEN STREET GREEN ROAD, DARENTH (TEMPORARY RESTRICTION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order restricting vehicular traffic to travelling at a speed of 10mph using convoy working on Grren Street Green Road, Darenth between the southern boundary of Durham Cottage and the southern boundary of Rats Castle, a total distance of 1050m.

The Order will become effective on 27th April 2009, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months, the works are planned to last 4 days. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

There is no alternative route for the route described above required.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate drainage works to be carried out by Kent Highway Services.

Highways - District of Dover

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(A258 DOVER ROAD, WALMER) (RESTRICTED ROADS) ORDER 2009 ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984

NOTICE is hereby given that Kent County Council has made an Order under Section 84 of the Act of 1984, the effect of which has extended the existing 30mph speed limit on a section of the A258 Dover Road, Walmer from the mid point of its junction with Ripple Road south westwards for a distance of 90.0 metres.

A copy of the Order, an explanatory statement and a map showing the extents of the scheme which shall come into operation on Monday 4th May 2009, may be inspected during normal office hours at the Kent County Council Offices, Invicta House, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 1XX and the Dover District Council Offices, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, Kent, CT16 3PJ.

Anyone may, by application to the High Court within 6 weeks of the date of publication of this Notice, challenge the validity of the Orders or of any provision contained in them on the grounds that it is not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, or of any instrument made there under, or that there has been a failure to comply with any statutory requirement in relation to the Order.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(TOWER HILL, DOVER) (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because separation of water supply works are proposed to be carried out, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting traffic on Tower Hill, Dover from the junction with number 1 Tower Hill to the junction with South Road on or after 11 May 2009 for an estimated period of 3 days or until such works are complete. The Order will remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months.

The alternative route for through traffic will be via Tower Hill, North Road and South Road.

Highways - District of Sevenoaks

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
POUNDSBRIDGE LANE, PENSHURST (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by vehicular traffic on Poundsbridge Lane, Penshurst from the entrance of Mill House to opposite Poundsbridge Manor

The Order will become effective on 27th April 2009, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months, the works are planned to last 12 weeks. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the route described above will be via: Penhurst Road, Rogues Hill, Fordcombe Road, New Road, Saints Hill, Spring Hill and The Lane.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate drainage works to be carried out by Kent Highway Services.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
HOLMESDALE HILL, SOUTH DARENTH (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by vehicular traffic on Holmesdale Hill, South Darenth from its junction with Gills Road for a distance of 450m.

The Order will become effective on 27th April 2009, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months, the works are planned to last 3 days. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the route described above will be via: Shrubbery Road, Rabbits Road, Canada Farm Road, Gills Road.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate tree cutting to renew an aerial cable for BT.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
HAVEN HILL, ASH CUM RIDLEY (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by vehicular traffic on Haven Hill, Ash Cum Ridley between its junctions with Malthouse Road and Fairseat Lane.

The Order will become effective on 27th April 2009, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months, the works are planned to last 1 week. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the route described above will be via: Malthouse Road, Stansed Hill and Fairseat Lane.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate the installation of a new electrical supply.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
HIGHLANDS HILL, SWANLEY VILLAGE ROAD AND WOOD STREET, SWANLEY (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by vehicular traffic from Highlands Hill at its junction with Main Road, on Swanley Village Road for its entire length and Wood Street, Swanley from its junction with Swanley Village Road to its junction with Church Road.

The Order will become effective on 27th April 2009, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months, the works are planned to last 2 days and commence on 27th April. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the route described above will be via: Swanley Lane, High Street, London Road, Button Street, Swanley Village Road.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate drainage works to be carried out by Kent Highway Services.

Highways - District of Shepway

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(BOUVERIE ROAD WEST, FOLKESTONE) (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because construction and crane works are proposed to be carried out, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting traffic on Bouverie Road West, Folkestone from the junction of Trinity Road to the junction with Trinity Gardens on or after 11 May 2009 for an estimated period of 3 seperate days as described in column 1 of schedule to this order or until such works are complete. The Order will remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months.

The alternative route for through traffic will be via Earls Avenue, Sandgate Road and Castle Hill Avenue.

Dates

11 May 2009 for 1 working day.
19 May 2009 for 1 working day.
26 May 2009 for 1 working day.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(THE OLD HIGH STREET, FOLKESTONE) (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because new electrical, foul and clean water works are proposed to be carried out, the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting traffic on The Old High Street, Folkestone from the junction with Rendezvous Street to the junction with Tontine Street on 27 April 2009 for an estimated period of 2 weeks or until such works are complete. The Order will remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months.

No alternative route for through traffic. Local access only.

Highways - Districts of Thanet and Canterbury

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(A299 THANET WAY ST NICHOLAS AT WADE AND A28 CANTERBURY ROAD BIRCHINGTON)(TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because highway improvement works are proposed to be carried out, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order on the routes described in column 1 of the Schedule on or after 11 May 2009 for an estimated period of 2 weeks or until such works are complete. The Order will remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months.

The alternative for the closure described in column 1 of the Schedule is described in column 4 of the Schedule:

THE SCHEDULE

Specified Road	Length of road affected	Dates	Alternative routes
A299 Thanet Way, Herne Bay and St Nicholas at Wade (coast bound)	Temporary Mandatory Speed Restriction of 50mph, 30m from the junction with Brook Lane, Herne Bay to the junction with St Nicholas Roundabout.	Between 11 May to 24 May 2009 for 2 weeks.	N/A
A299 Thanet Way, St Nicholas at Wade (London bound)	Temporary Mandatory Speed Restriction of 50mph, 750m prior to St Nicholas Roundabout to 100m west of Frost Farm.	Between 11 May to 24 May 2009 for 2 weeks.	N/A
A28 Canterbury Road Birchington (London bound)	Temporary Mandatory Speed Restriction of 50mph, 750m prior to the junction with St Nicholas Roundabout	Between 11 May to 24 May 2009 for 2 weeks.	N/A
A299 Thanet Way, St Nicholas at Wade	Closed from the junction with Chambers Wall to the junction with St Nicholas Roundabout in an easterly direction only	Between 11 May to 24 May 2009 for 2 nights. Works will commence after 21:00hrs until 05:00hrs	Chambers Wall and Potten Street Road
A299 Thanet Way, St Nicholas at Wade	Temporary Mandatory Speed Restriction of 40mph, 400m east of the western junction with Chambers Wall for 150m	Between 11 May to 24 May 2009 for 2 nights. Works will commence after 21:00hrs until 05:00hrs	N/A
A299 Thanet Way, St Nicholas at Wade	Temporary Mandatory Speed Restriction of 30mph, 550m east of the western junction with Chambers Wall to the eastern junction with Chambers Wall	Between 11 May to 24 May 2009 for 2 nights. Works will commence after 21:00hrs until 05:00hrs	N/A

Highways - District of Thanet

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(VARIOUS ROADS, THANET) (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because Carriageway Surfacing works are proposed to be carried out, the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting traffic on various roads, Thanet from as described in column 1 of the schedule to this order on or after 27 April 2009 for an estimated period of as described in column 3 of the schedule to this order or until such works are complete.

The alternative route for through traffic will be via as described in column 2 of the schedule to this order.

For further information, please contact Kent Highway Services, on 08458 247 800 (local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways

Kent Highway Services

The Affected Route	The Alternative Route	Date & Times of Road Closure
Manston Road, Ramsgate Manston Court Road to Haine Road	Haine Road, A299 Thanet Way, B2190 Manston Road, B2050 Manston Road OR Manston Road, Vincent Road, Manston Court Road, Haine Road	30 April - 8 May 2009 inclusive (19:00 - 05:00)
High Street St Lawrence, Ramsgate (Wilfred Road to Chapel Road)	Eastbound signed from Nethercourt Roundabout. London Road, St Augustine Road, Grange Road, Paragon, Harbour Parade, Madeira Walk, Wellington Crescent, Victoria Parade, Victoria Road, Boundary Road. Southbound: Manston Road, Haine Road, Canterbury Road East and then follow diversion route. Westbound - Pick up at Chatham Street traffic signals for Margate Road, Allenby Road, Newington Road (High Street traffic to use Park Road and Shah Place then diversion route) Wilfred Road traffic to use Grange Road, London Road and diversion route. Grange Road traffic to use Wilfred Road, Station Approach Road, Princes Road and diversion route	7 - 14 May 2009 inclusive (19:00 - 00:00)
Boundary Road, Ramsgate	Hereson Road, Ramsgate Road, Bromstone Road, Pysons Road, Margate Road OR Victoria Road, Victoria Parade, Wellington Crescent, Madeira Walk, Harbour Parade, Paragon, Grange Road, St Augustines Road, London Road, Nethercourt Hill, High Street St Lawrence, Park Road - Reverse for opposite direction.	7 - 14 May 2009 inclusive (19:00 - 00:00)
Hartsdown Road junction with Nash Road (Coffin Corner traffic signals), Margate. Junction closure will affect approaches from: 1. Nash Road 2. Manston Road 3. Shottendane Road 4. Hartsdown Road 5. College Road	1. Star Lane, Ramsgate Road, College Road, Tivoli Road, Tivoli Park Avenue and All Saints Avenue 2. Shottendane Road, High Street Garlinge, Canterbury Road, All Saints Avenue, Tivoli Park Avenue, Tivoli Road, Beatrice Road and Ramsgate Road. 3. High Street Garlinge, Canterbury Road, All Saints Avenue, Tivoli Park Avenue, Tivoli Road, Beatrice Road and Ramsgate Road. 4. Hartsdown Road, All Saints Avenue, Tivoli Park Avenue, Tivoli Road, Beatrice Road and Ramsgate Road. 5. Tivoli Road, Tivoli Park Avenue and All Saints Avenue	18 - 19 May 2009 inclusive (19:00 - 05:00)
Queens Road/Ramsgate Road, Broadstairs High Street to Granville Avenue	Advise from The Broadway and Gladstone Road junctions using Osbourne Road, Seafield Road, Gladstone Road and Ramsgate Road. Albion Street traffic to use High Street then diversion route. Southbound traffic to use York Street, Oscar Road, Victoria Parade, West Cliff Avenue, Dumpton Park Drive, Montefiore Avenue and Ramsgate Road	20 -22 May 2009 inclusive (19:00 - 05:00)

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(QUEENS AVENUE, MARGATE) (ONE WAY) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because carriageway surfacing works are proposed to be carried out, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order to make Queens Avenue, Margate one way for westbound traffic during night work on or after 11 May 2009 for an estimated period of one week or until such works are complete.

Eastbound traffic will use Grosvenor Gardens, High Street and Ramsgate Road.

This order will come into force on Monday 11 May 2009, will be in operation when the appropriate signs are erected, and will remain valid for a period of eighteen months. The order will allow the above mentioned restrictions to be implemented as and when required for works of a similar nature at any time for the duration of the order.

Highways - Borough of Tonbridge & Malling

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(OLD ROAD, WATERINGBURY) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Old Road, Wateringbury from the junction of A26 Tonbridge Road to Red House Gardens on or after Monday 27th April 2009 for a period of up to 12 weeks or until such works are completed.

The alternative route for the route described above is for southbound traffic via Old Road, Pizien Well Road, A26 Tonbridge Road and for northbound traffic vice versa.

Kent Highway Services apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary for essential drainage works. Should you require any further information the Kent Highway Services contact is Alison Lewis on 08458 247 800.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(MILL STREET, SNODLAND LEVEL CROSSING)(PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC)TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by traffic on Mill Street at the level crossing. This order will come into effect on or after Saturday 2nd May for a period of up to 2 nights or until such works are completed.

There is no alternative route available.

Network Rail apologise for any inconvenience caused, which are necessary for repairs for track maintenance to Snodland Level crossing. Should you require any further information about these works, the contact is Roger Casement on 01227 366000.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(VIGO ROAD, STANSTED) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Vigo Road, Stansted outside Whitecroft on or after Monday 27th April 2009 for a period of up to 4 weeks or until such works are completed.

The alternative route for the route described above is for westbound traffic via A227 Gravesend Road, Fairseat Lane, Platt House Lane, Vigo Road and for eastbound traffic vice versa.

EDF Energy apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential works, which are necessary to install a new electricity supply, should you require any further information regarding these works, their contact is Emma Orsborne of Amber Langis Limited on 01474 573831.

Highways - Borough of Tunbridge Wells

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(SWATLING LEVEL CROSSING) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Swatling level crossing on or after Thursday 30th April 2009 for a period of up to 1 day or until such works are completed.

The alternative route for the route described above is for Eastbound traffic via Queens Street, Church Road and Maidstone road, and for Westbound traffic vice versa.

Network Rail apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential track Maintenance purposes, should you require any further information regarding these works, their contact is Roger Casement on 01227 366000.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(BEDFORD ROAD, SOUTHBOROUGH) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC)TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Bedford Road, Southborough outside 2A on or after Monday 11th May 2009 for a period of up to 2 days or until such works are completed.

The alternative route for the route described above is for northbound traffic via Western Road, London Road, Meadow Road, Bedford Road and for southbound traffic vice versa.

South East Water apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential works, which are necessary to provide a connection to the mains. Should you require any further information regarding these works, their contact is Richard Rogers of Morgan Est on 01825 745727.

For further information, please contact Kent Highway Services, on 08458 247 800 (local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways

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GTI No6 drives to maintain a legend

By **STEVE LOADER**

VOLKSWAGEN'S original Golf GTI inspired the whole hot hatchback genre in the 1970s yet has maintained a lofty detachment from wannabes ever since.

Golf GTIs have not always been the best hot hatches to drive, but they have been the classiest – no 'chav-tastic' big spoilers were allowed to soil the image.

The arrival of generation six in May (from £22,410) promises to fine-tune the mix of power, driving pleasure and discernment, not least because the new Golf range marks such a major step forward in the overall, hatchback sector.

The latest car looks good, feels beautifully made and has an image that manages to be both premium and class-less; VW's advertising hit the mark well with that famous TV clip of a man leaving a casino as a loser, but looking like a winner as he climbed into his Golf.

So, weaving the GTI wand over the latest Golf promises much. VW claims the new car is "faster, sharper and more powerful" and, mindful of current market pre-occupations, "cleaner, safer and more efficient".

Like the outgoing GTI, it has a turbocharged 1,984cc engine, but transformed by revised pistons and rings, oil pump, induction system and high-pressure fuel pump.

As a result, the old car's 200PS (197bhp) output has been boosted to 210, delivering a sprint to 62mph in 6.9 seconds against the 7.2 of its predecessor.

Despite such GTI credentials, the car has also 'greened up' its act with CO2 emissions falling from 189g/km to 170g/km (DSG: 173 g/km) and average economy rising nearly 4mpg to around 39mpg.

The car is available as a three or five-door with a six-speed manual or, for a £1,300 premium, VW's slick double-clutch auto DSG gearbox, which affects fuel consumption only marginally.

Interestingly, VW has a new electronic gizmo to ensure the prodigious power through the front wheels can actually be applied to the road without the steering wheel jerking in the driver's hands.

New computerised driver aids of recent years have done much to cure this so-called 'torque steer' and the previous Golf GTI seemed untroubled by it – unlike some rivals – but perhaps VW was keen to keep things that way.

Hence the XDS electronically controlled differential on the new car, devised to produce less wheelspin and greater control and precision on demanding roads.

It is complemented by GTI springs and dampers and lowered ride height – 22mm at the front and 15mm at the rear.

Keen drivers can also specify VW's adaptive chassis control system (ACC), featuring pneumatically controlled damper units.

As ever, the latest GTI avoids tasteless tat, but still looks like a hot Golf: it has a more aggressive front bumper with deep honeycomb air dam framed by vertical foglights, a rear diffuser flanked by big chrome tailpipes, subtle tailgate spoiler/wing and 17-inch 'Monza' alloys and red brake callipers.

Standard interior features include red and black tartan sports seats with red stitching, a flat-bottom GTI multifunction steering wheel, and twin-zone climate control.

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FIRST GEAR

Compiled by Steve Loader

Peugeot packs more CC power

HAVING set a precedent in the 1930s for folding hardtop cars, Peugeot returned to the market in 2001 with the 206CC.

It sparked a CC (coupé convertible) sector boom now muffled by recession.

Seemingly undaunted though, Peugeot launches its latest CC on 1 June priced from £19,495; the new 308CC is both superior in style and driving pleasure to the 307CC it replaces thanks to extra length, breadth and track.

It also feels more rigid and offers six powertrains to please all comers, from smooth diesels to refined and powerful 1.6-litre petrol alternatives – the fruit of collaboration with BMW/Mini.

The newcomer features the world's first ever front seat-mounted head airbags and automatically extending roll bars to protect occupants in a crash, but it is the drive and interior quality that impresses most.

Toyota gets tough with Urban Cruiser

TOYOTA has echoed that old line "When the going gets tough..." by launching a raft of new models and facelifts for 2009.

Next month, we get the Urban Cruiser SUV cum 4x4 wannabe – Toyota hopes it will be as much a milestone as its RAV4.

This 'son of RAV' is priced from £14,500-17,600, a smaller off-roader style model for city streets made meaner as the recession bites.

Both engine options benefit from Toyota's new Optimal Drive, shorthand for a batch of technologies delivering more power with lower CO2 emissions and fuel waste.

Nevertheless, both Cruiser options need more than 12 seconds to hit 60mph – not quite the performance to go with the hooligan looks.

The mainstay engine for now is a 89bhp 1.4-litre diesel (from £16,400) capable of averaging nearly 60mpg while delivering 4x4 power as required.

The more interesting option is the front-wheel drive only 100bhp 1.33-litre petrol entry model, capable of averaging 50+mpg.

Porsche to try out four-door formula

THERE might be a recession on, but some high-end customers will be unaffected.

At least Porsche hopes so as it gears up to launch this response to the vogue for four-door sports tourers.

The new Panamera Gran Turismo goes on sale on in September priced from £72,266 with a choice of 400 or 500bhp 4.8-litre V8 engines and rear or four-wheel drive.

It sounds like a lot of money in current times, but perhaps not for a Porsche that seats four and has all the cachet, heritage and looks of the classic 911.

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CONTRASTS: The sensible Vauxhall Insignia ecoFLEX (left) and the pumped up VXR (right)

Insignia 'twins' signal a conflict in motor market

by STEVE LOADER

VAUXHALL is not alone in battling the contradictions of a modern motor market.

Like the creepy Gollum character in the Lord of the Rings movie trilogy, carmakers are assailed on both sides by demons – new ones demanding greener cars and stats about mpg and CO2 emissions, while the old ones crave the reassurance of bhp, seconds to 60mph and top speed.

No wonder Vauxhall has just unveiled sharply contrasting additions to the Insignia range: an ultra-green ecoFLEX version tuned for the environment and recession and a 'turbo-nutter' VXR tuned for the senses.

The VXR echoes the classic Lotus Carlton of the early 1990s with a lowered suspension, 19-inch alloys as standard, more muscular front and rear ends including rear spoiler and dual matt chrome exhausts to shout the car's extra power.

There is also a sporty cabin with lots of VXR branding and twin Recaro front seats.

And while it cannot match the Carlton's 377bhp power, it does have 325 and the ability to apply it properly through all-wheel drive, hitting 60mph in 5.8 seconds.

You can also have this powerhouse in saloon, hatchback and elegant estate or Sports Tourer format; a good old-style halo car to attack the likes of Audi's new S4 sports model and undercut it on price – although Vauxhall has yet to announce prices for this summer debutante.

Its prim Insignia ecoFLEX sister is on sale right now though, from £19,600 with all sorts of savings attached and, thanks to the slinky styling of the Insignia, still catching the eye without pumped-up VXR cladding.

OK, performance is more relaxed with 0-60mph taking 8.9 seconds, but business drivers pay just 18 per cent Benefit in Kind tax – the second lowest band for a diesel car and 21 per cent lower than its standard Insignia equivalent – and ecoFlex owners save £25 a year road tax.

The ecoFLEX is also 10 per cent better on fuel than its standard sister, averaging around 55mpg.

All savings have been achieved by even better aerodynamics – ride height is marginally lower and the car's underside has been streamlined – low rolling resistance Michelin tyres and different gearbox ratios.

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DrivingReview

by STEVELOADER
CHIEF DRIVING CORRESPONDENT
steve.loader@kosmedia.co.uk

SEAT Exeo

Hot air storm to drive Exeo sales

EXCELLENT: The new Seat Exeo is so good it could tempt a whole new host of customers who have so far overlooked the Spanish brand

BOSSES at Seat must hope that the vast amount of hot air exhaled over its new Exeo will whip up storming sales.

Industry watchers really cannot make up their minds over what is effectively an eight-year-old model – the previous generation Audi A4.

But it all adds up to publicity and profile for Seat and I think it was actually shrewd of Audi' sister brand to lift the former executive star's production line and drop it in Spain.

For a start, it is still a cracking car, replaced ahead of its time and none the worse for subtle re-engineering and visual tweaking by Seat.

Secondly, the so-called family saloon and estate sector – yes, a remodelled A4 Avant is due soon too – has taken a kicking lately through competition from MPVs and SUVs.

Nevertheless, there is still profitability; enough to entice Seat, which has never really challenged here before, to enter it while avoiding the design, tooling up and pre-production costs of a totally new car.

Thirdly, the Exeo offers potential for Seat to retain existing customers looking to trade-up to a family model while attracting interest and possible conquest customers – people who never looked at the brand before, but are now tempted by an 'Audi for Seat money'.

And that bargain executive car proposition is delivered not only by prices starting from just £17,740, but trims and specifications that would have cost you dear in the days when Audi's four rings adorned the bonnet.

It is the Exeo's bonnet that is hardest to get used to; it might take design cues from other Seats, but the sweeping 'dynamic line' that has

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flanked recent Seats is conspicuously absent and it can't help looking like a 'dodgy Audi'.

The rear end is more successful rework, with Seat's badge cum boot release sitting dead centre and replacing the A4's number plate – the latter drops to bumper level on the Seat.

The Exeo also cannot help suffering from the A4's relatively cramped rear seating – a drawback redressed almost excessively by its replacement.

But remember the greater benefits of this upmarket 'hand-me-down' exercise: pricing, peerless build quality, safety, reliability, a high quality cabin – actually ported over from the even more premium A4 Cabriolet rather than the saloon/estate – a decent boot and a terrific drive.

It is the last that deserves most praise; Seat engineers could have sat on their hands and simply gone with the same sporty chassis set-up as the Audi, since the second generation A4 really put pressure on the sector-leading BMW 3-Series in the compact executive sector and boosted Audi's UK volumes.

That said, the A4's handling and ride pleased keen drivers, but could be irritating in everyday use and a pain in the backside for passengers, particularly the Sport chassis spec.

So Seat has done some good in-house work here. There is also a Sport option, but our test car had the standard set-up that delivers a refined ride and responsive handling even on the most challenging roads.

Our mid-range SE spec car, with its entry level 2.0-litre 143PS/141bhp turbodiesel and six-speed gearbox also impressed with its liveliness, excellent cabin refinement and motorway composure – it should also average more than 50mpg.

The A4 cabriolet dashboard really oozes quality and you can imagine some internal wrangling at Audi HQ over why Seat was allowed to walk away with so much for the Exeo project.

Equipment levels are lavish, with our SE including cruise control, USB/MP3 port, Bluetooth phone connectivity and voice control plus steering wheel-mounted controls for sound system and phone, rain sensing wipers, dual-zone climate control, electrically heated/folding/adjustable door mirrors and smart alloys.

Never mind all that hot air – check out a bargain.

DrivingStats

- Seat Exeo 2.0 TDI CR 143PS SE £18,340
- Range: £17,740-21,340
- Garage stats: 4.66m by 1.77m four-door saloon
- Powertrain: 1,968cc/141bhp four-cylinder turbodiesel driving front wheels through a six-speed gearbox
- Performance: top speed 133mph and 0-62mph in 9.2 seconds
- How green?: road tax band-F (£125/yr), CO2 emissions143g/km
- Official fuel figures: combined 51.4mpg
- Euro NCAP safety rating (0-5 stars): n/a
- Fuel tank: 70 litres/15.4 gallons
- Insurance group: 12E
- Warranty: three years/60,000 miles
- Website: www.seat.co.uk

Rivals: Alfa Romeo 159, Audi A4, BMW 3-Series, Citroen C5, Ford Mondeo, Honda Accord, Jaguar X-Type, Lexus IS, Mazda6, Mercedes-Benz C-Class, Saab 9-3, Subaru Legacy, Toyota Avensis, Vauxhall Insignia, VW Passat and Volvo S60.

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Approximately 100 Four Wheel Drive vehicles.

Commercial Vehicle Auction
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Approximately 50 commercial vehicles plus some Caravans and Campers.

General Car Auction for cars under £1000
Starts at 12.00noon
Approximately 80-100 cars on offer, all makes & models.

General Car Auction for cars £1000 and over
Starts at 3.00pm
Approximately 100-150 cars on offer, all makes and models.

NOTES FOR ALL SALES

Although entries are accepted up to 7.00pm on Sunday 3rd May, we would strongly advise you, where possible, to book your vehicles in as early as possible, either by phone, email, or our new instant pre-booking service available on the internet to get maximum coverage.

To book your vehicle in instantly on the internet, simply visit our website at www.hobbsparker.co.uk and click on "Car Auctions", then click on "Add Vehicle to Sale List".

As well as our usual opening times, we shall be open from 3.00pm to 7.00pm Sat 2nd and Sun 3rd May to take entries. Regrettably no entries will be accepted on the sale day.

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FORD

C-MAX, 1.8TDCi Zetec 5dr, ra08hjv, metallic moondust. with over00 ford cars in stock today, contact the used car team for more help, all vehicles come with balance of 3 year. insurance group:7, silver, 4000 miles, £11900, Sittingbourne, 01795 426693 (TRADE)

C-MAX, 2.0 Zetec 5dr Auto, bw57kxp, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, electric mirrors, electric windows, foglights, folding rear seats, heated screen, locking wheel nuts, immobiliser, metallic paintwork, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, radio, remote locking, tinted glass. insurance group:11, black, 10475 miles, £10995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

C-MAX, 2.0 Zetec 5dr Auto, ya07vbd, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, child locks, computer, driver airbag, foglights, locking wheel nuts, lumbar support, immobiliser, metallic paintwork, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, seatback tables, side airbags, radio/cd, spoiler, rear headrests, tinted glass, blue, 6933 miles, £8995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FIESTA, 1.6 Ghia 5dr, gf06aww, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, computer, driver airbag, electric mirrors, electric windows, foglights, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, radio/cd, rear headrests. insurance group:7, silver, 26493 miles, £5995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FIESTA, 1.4 TDCi Zetec 5dr, gk58vmc, metallic squeeze. abs, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, computer, driver airbag, electric mirrors, electric windows, foglights, passenger airbag, remote locking, radio/cd, heated screen, metallic paintwork. insurance group:4, green, 7000 miles, £10995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FIESTA, 1.4 TDCi Style 5dr [Climate], nx58oou, adjustable seats, air conditioning, driver airbag, electric mirrors, electric windows, head restraints, folding rear seats, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, radio/cd, rear headrests. insurance group:5, black, 10250 miles, £8995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FIESTA, 1.6 TDCi Zetec S 3dr SMC Demo, gk08ujd, adjustable seats, air conditioning, alloy wheels, computer, driver airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, radio/cd, rear headrests, sports seats, blue tooth, bluetooth voice control. silver, 10679 miles, £8995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FOCUS, 1.6 Zetec 5dr [115] [Climate pack] B/T & P/A, gf06awr, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, alloy wheels, climate control, computer, driver airbag, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests, sports seats. insurance group:6, blue, 15952 miles, £7995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FOCUS, 2.0 TDCi Titanium 5dr [Euro 4], gl56baa, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, computer, driver airbag, electric mirrors, electric windows, head restraints, folding rear seats, lumbar support, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, rear armrest, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests, sports seats, part leather, sony stereo. insurance group:10, black, 21227 miles, £9495, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FOCUS, 1.6 LX 5dr [115], ck06fwn, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, driver airbag, electric mirrors, electric windows, head restraints, folding rear seats, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests. insurance group:6, blue, 62661 miles, £7495, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FOCUS, 1.6 Ghia 5dr [115], av55nlf, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, computer, cruise control, driver airbag,immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, rear armrest, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests. insurance group:6, grey, 22947 miles, £7495, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FOCUS, 1.8 Zetec 5dr [Climate Pack], en57sjo, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, alloy wheels, climate control, computer, driver airbag, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests, sports seats, heated front windscreen. insurance group:6, blue, 13706 miles, £8990, Crayford, 01322 621667 (TRADE)

KA, 1.3i [70] 3dr, ls06uou, driver airbag, head restraints, folding rear seats, immobiliser, power assisted steering, radio/cassette, please contact les bellchambers. insurance group:2, red, 20618 miles, £4695, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

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KUGA, 2.5T Titanium 5dr, ej58cxm, leather, dvd sat nav, xenon headlights, titanium x pack, titanium convenience pack, titanium appearance pack, 18 alloys, abs, head restraints, folding rear seats, power assisted steering, rear armrest, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests, sports seats, traction control. blue, 939 miles, £21450, Sittingbourne, 01795 426693 (TRADE)

HONDA

JAZZ, 1.4i-DSi SE Sport 5dr CVT-7, gk53mup, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, central locking, driver airbag, electric mirrors, electric windows, electric sunroof, head restraints, folding rear seats, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests. insurance group:3, green, 51500 miles, £5495, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

HYUNDAI

GETZ, 1.1 GSI 3dr, gf05cwu, abs, adjustable steering column/wheel, central locking, driver airbag, folding rear seats, electric windows, immobiliser, passenger airbag, radio/cd, power assisted steering. insurance group:3, red, 40000 miles, £3995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

KIA

CEED, 1.6 LS 5dr Auto, gl07jxu, petrol, gold, 16000 miles, £8995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

PICANTO, 1.1 LS 5dr, gj57cdu, abs, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, central locking, driver airbag, electric windows, head restraints, folding rear seats, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, radio/cd, rear headrests. insurance group:3, red, 19232 miles, £4995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

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CLS320 CDI, 2007, iridium silver metallic, 31451 miles, £25800, Maidstone, 0845 481 6487 (TRADE)

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MITSUBISHI

COLT, 1.1 Mirage 3dr, gf55kyj, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, radio/cd, rear headrests. insurance group:4, grey, 11675 miles, £4995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

COLT, 1.1 Blue 3dr, gj56xmo, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, alloy wheels, central locking, computer, driver airbag, electric windows, head restraints, folding rear seats, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests. insurance group:3, blue, 22000 miles, £5495, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

COLT, 1.1 CZ1 3dr, ly08gwn, abs, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, central locking, computer, electric windows, power assisted steering, radio/cd, rear headrests. insurance group:3, red, 64 miles, £5995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

COLT, 1.3 CZ2 5dr *Parking Sensors*, gk58vgf, abs, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, central locking, cruise control, electric mirrors, locking wheel nuts, multi function steering wheel, remote locking. insurance group:5, saving of_, black, 4000 miles, £8495, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

COLT, 1.1 CZ1 3dr, lv07ssz, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, central locking, computer, driver airbag, electric windows, head restraints, folding rear seats, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, radio/cd, rear headrests. insurance group:3, black, 25000 miles, £4995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

COLT, 1.5 CZC3 2dr, gk09nwt, abs, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, computer, driver airbag, foglights, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd. insurance group:7, orange, 100 miles, £10999, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

COLT, 1.5 D-ID CZ2 5dr Auto, gk08ycj, abs, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning,electric windows, foglights, immobiliser, head restraints, passenger airbag, radio/cd, power assisted steering, rear headrests. insurance group:5, blue, 8500 miles, £7995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

I-CAR, 5dr Auto, gn08gzw, abs, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, driver airbag, electric mirrors, electric windows, folding rear seats, locking wheel nuts, immobiliser, metallic paintwork, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, radio, remote locking, tinted glass. insurance group:4, saving, silver, 500 miles, £7993, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

L200, Double Cab 2.5 Td Trojan, ej56ych, abs,adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, leather seats, locking wheel nuts, power assisted steering, remote locking. silver, 27000 miles, £8495, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

L200, 2.5TD Trojan Double Cab, ro06hza, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, electric windows, foglights, leather seats, locking wheel nuts, immobiliser, power assisted steering, remote locking. black, 51000 miles, £7495, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

L200, 2.5 Di-D Warrior Double Cab, dy07ovb, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, remote locking, traction control. grey, 34000 miles, £10495, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

L200, 2.5 Di-D Animal Double Cab, fe07aez, abs, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning,foglights, leather upholstery, limited slip differential, locking wheel nuts, immobiliser, power assisted steering, remote locking. grey, 34000 miles, £10995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

LANCER, 1.8 GS3 4dr CVT, lx08zrf, abs, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, alloy wheels, climate control, computer, cruise control, front armrest, folding rear seats, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests, traction control. insurance group:8, saving, blue, 6800 miles, £12995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests, traction control. insurance group:8, 3yrs / 37500 mile free servicing with this car, saving_, silver, 9000 miles, £12995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

PEUGEOT

107, 1.0 Sport XS 3dr, gj07tuv, abs, adjustable steering column/wheel, alloy wheels, driver airbag, electric windows, front armrest, head restraints, folding rear seats, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, rear armrest, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests. insurance group:1, black, 9800 miles, £6995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

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RENAULT

CLIO, 1.2 16V Dynamique 3dr [AC], gf55gsy, abs, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, central locking, computer, driver airbag, folding rear seats, electric mirrors, electric windows, foglights, immobiliser, head restraints, passenger airbag, radio/cd, power assisted steering, rear headrests, remote locking, side airbags, sports seats, sunroof. insurance group:3, silver, 14615 miles, £5495, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

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YARIS, 1.0 WT-i Colour Collection 3dr, electric windows, foglights, head restraints, folding rear seats, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests. insurance group:2, silver, 26000 miles, £5495, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

VAUXHALL

ASTRA, 1.6i 16V SXi Digital 5dr, eo55hym, abs, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, central locking, computer, driver airbag, electric mirrors, electric windows, foglights, head restraints, folding rear seats, lumbar support, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd multichanger, rear headrests, sports seats. insurance group:6, black, 23000 miles, £6995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

ASTRA, 1.8 VVT Exclusiv Black 2dr, ly07axs, abs, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, computer, cruise control, driver airbag, electric mirrors, electric windows, foglights, head restraints, heated seats, leather seats, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests, sports seats. insurance group:10, black, 25000 miles, £11495, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

CORSA, 1.4i 16V SXi 5dr Auto [AC], vn07ons, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, driver airbag, folding rear seats, electric mirrors, electric windows, foglights, passenger airbag, radio/cd, power assisted steering, rear headrests, remote locking, side airbags, sports seats. insurance group:4, black, 15000 miles, £8995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

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Algarve brainwave is a hot proposition

By **TONY PATEY**
tony.patey@kosmedia.co.uk

IT'S BUSINESS on a plate – or rather hot stone – but Kent couple Mike and Hilary Moloney are finding that hobbies which turn into money-spinners carry the down-sides of going it alone as well as successes.

They used to have regular holidays on Portugal's Algarve. Little did they think that an idea they had during a break there would eventually sizzle their social life.

A memorable chateaubriand steak cooked on a hot stone in a restaurant a couple of years ago was the trigger for the couple to track down one for their own kitchen.

The trail led them from the chef to a branch of the supermarket Macro, and soon the first batch of the grills were being dispatched to Kent and sold to family and friends.

Hot stone cooking goes back to the ancient civilizations and is reckoned to be a healthy and natural low-fat style of tabletop cooking without oil or fat.

Mr Moloney said: "I was working full-time as a finance director for an international company, but what started out as a hobby, selling these things on eBay and from our garage, soon took off.

"We began to expand the range, importing traditional cataplana cooking pots and terra-cotta tableware. Soon our four-car garage was full, our loft was full, the carport was stacked and even the gazebo in the garden was piled high with stock. We had to do something."

It was then the business went to a more professional level. Mr Moloney, who is a council member of the Thames Gateway Chamber of Commerce, realised he needed advice, so he started attending workshops and seminars run by Business Link, the Institute of Directors and Chambers of Commerce.

He is now seeing a 90 per cent year-on-year rise in turnover in the cookware and tableware marketing business which he admits is remarkable given the economic climate.

They now have a showroom for their Kitchen To Table range of 1,500 lines at Laker Road on Rochester Airport Estate. It was bought by their Portuguese trading supplier, Abel Santiago, which is now their landlord, and they have self-employed selling agents across the country.

IoD Kent chairman Frazer Thompson said: "Mike is an example of how a combination of hard work and sound research pays off.

"We tend to be experts in certain areas, but by listening to others, all business people can learn and benefit from sharing and passing on our experience.

Although business generally is going through some difficult times, there are still opportunities to be seized."

MIKE MOLONEY: Hot stone cooking business turned a hobby into a moneyspinner

Drumming up Aussie backing for fuel savings

NOBODY'S FUEL: Darryl Watts with Peter Dane of Apollo

A KENT firm looks set to make it big Down Under after an Australian company signed a deal to spread its hydrogen energy technology throughout the continent.

Oil Drum, an award-winning renewable energy company based at the Canterbury Enterprise Hub at the University of Kent, has granted a licence to Apollo Gas Products, a business based near Sydney.

The deal was struck after Apollo recognised the potential for Oil Drum's Save-Fuel device for the Australian market where the freight transport industry, with its road-trains, has to cover huge distances. The fuel-saving device has been shown in independent tests to reduce consumption by more than 10 per cent, reduce carbon dioxide and cut hydrocarbon emissions to zero.

Darryl Watts, managing director of Oil Drum, said: "Australia has the largest road-legal vehicles in the world, with some super trucks, known as road-trains, weighing in at close to 200 tonnes, which is nearly fives times the maximum allowed in the UK.

"Add to this the immense distances these vehicles operate over and fuel consumption is even more of an issue."

Since it was launched, the system – which is a compact unit attached to a truck or bus and powered by the vehicle's own power source, has been fitted to more than 500 vehicles.

Oil Drum, which won the Kent Innovation Challenge in 2008, is also working with BAE Systems, the global defence and aerospace company, to evaluate the application of the product on military vehicles.

The company is also in negotiations with other potential licensees throughout the world, including the USA, South Africa and Singapore. The international licensing agreement was developed for Oil Drum by commercial law firm Vertex Law, based at Kings Hill.

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The finals countdown

By **TONY PATEY**
tony.patey@kosmedia.co.uk

KENT Science Park is one of only three places shortlisted in the national UK Science Park Association Awards.

It has been shortlisted in the Science Park with the Most Successful Project category. The two other finalists are Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus in Cheshire, and Manchester Science Park.

The category recognises efforts to regenerate an area, bring on international collaboration, develop educational initiatives with universities, colleges and schools and promote relations with the business community.

KSP, near Sittingbourne, is home to 77 businesses employing more than 1,250 people, with more than 55 per cent of these workers living within Swale.

It has helped establish the Kent Science Resource Centre and bring degree-level training to the area, and in recent months hosted a series of masterclasses to introduce school children from across the county to a career in science and technology.

Site director James Speck said: "This is great news and confirms our position as a leading UK science park and one with ambitions to deliver success, not just for the companies based on the site but also the wider community through training and employment opportunities.

"At a time when more people in Swale are finding themselves without work as many traditional industries and the High Street bear the brunt of the recession, it is interesting to note that over the last year the number of people employed at the park has increased."

It recently applied for planning permission from Swale council to extend the park by a further four hectares from the current 22 hectares, create an international headquarters for an award-winning tenant and construct a further two technology units.

In 2006 it was named the Most Enterprising Place in the South East by Seeda (South East England Development Agency).

Kent Science Park will now go up against the other shortlisted entrants with the winners announced at a gala dinner in September at Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester.

SHORTLIST: James Speck, left, and park colleagues are delighted by their inclusion

Sales rocketing as Synchronica opens Gateway

A KENT-based global provider of mobile email and synchronisation software and services saw its sales rocket last year.

Revenues for Synchronica, whose shares are quoted on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM), increased by 61 per cent to £3.7 million, against £2.3m in 2007.

The Tunbridge Wells firm said results were in line with market expectations and there was a significant increase in contract wins, with 13 new customers in 12 countries aiming to focus on mobile email in emerging markets.

A new version of its key product, Mobile Gateway 4.0, has been launched, giving the potential for email to reach all mobile phones.

It raised £5.1m to fund acquisitions and further expansion of sales and marketing activities.

This year it has already done a significant deal involving a global reseller agreement with Nokia Siemens Networks, the world's second largest network equipment provider.

CEO Carsten Brinkschulte, pictured above, said: "We have shown substantial progress in 2008. We have had a strong start to 2009 with revenues for the first quarter exceeding the levels generated in the entire first half of last year."

Synchronica has a development centre in Germany and offices in the USA, Hong Kong and Dubai.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Anne Ray is well known on the county's business circuit, especially in east Kent, and she was Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce's Entrepreneur of the Year in 2007.
She runs a marketing and PR company called Achieve, in Canterbury, and with the target of helping businesses make more money it can either do the marketing for them or train people to do it themselves.
All Anne's clients go to her by recommendation or personal contact. She's very unusual in that she does not advertise or have a website. Over the last two years three of her clients have won top business awards and others have been finalists.
Anne set up her business five years ago when she was in remission from advanced colon cancer. She got the all clear two years later. Having cancer at a relatively young age acted as a catalyst for Anne to set up her own business and travel the world.
As well as her commercial work for companies, she is much in demand as an international motivational and business speaker. Last year she spoke as far afield as Malaysia at the Business Network International global members' event in Kuala Lumpur.
Anne teaches public speaking skills one-to-one, in-company or in one-day public workshops. She also runs public workshops and in-house training on marketing and sales skills and working with the media. Achieve has clients across all sectors of industry including retail, IT, financial services and health. It also works in the not-for-profit sector, where clients include the University of Kent. Anne spoke to KOS Media business editor Tony Patey:

Anne's experience helps her Achieve

Q ***What is your background in the industry?***

A Prior to setting up my own company I worked as a director of marketing, sales and PR for a national organisation with an annual turnover of £44 million.

Before that I had a similar role covering Scotland and Northern Ireland. I have worked in this field for 20 years, gaining experience of all aspects of marketing, sales and PR. I also have a great deal of experience of writing for the press and helping others to best present themselves to the media.

Q ***What services do you offer?***

A My aim is to help companies grow rapidly without having to invest huge amounts. I use market research and customer feedback I obtain myself to identify what will best rapidly grow a particular company.

Often my recommendations involve little outlay for a business. For example, sometimes introducing clients to the right people can transform their business. It is a question of knowing what to do. I can draw on my sales, marketing or PR experience, or a combination of all three as required.

I love the fact that the work is so varied. One day I might be running a promotional event for several hundred people and the next at my desk devising a growth strategy.

On an on-going basis I am doing press work and promotional literature together with customer feedback and market research.

With public speaking skills, the key is showing people how to enjoy the experience. I have a degree in English which is useful for the press work and copywriting.

Q ***What is your view of the industry in the economic downturn?***

A Companies that give clients a good return on their investment will continue to prosper. Those that don't will struggle.

Q ***What advice would you give a youngster looking to start in marketing as a career?***

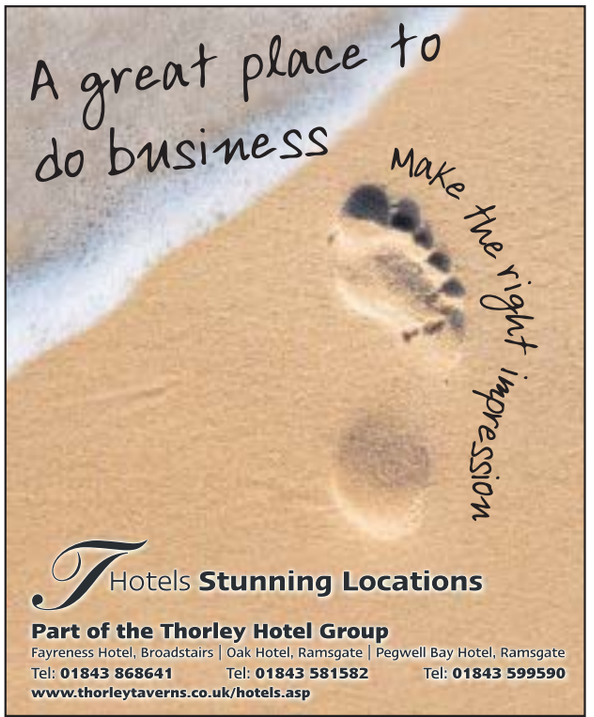
A I would recommend you obtain as much relevant experience as you can prior to applying for jobs. This will help you develop your skills and it also shows commitment.

For example, if you are a student you could offer to write for your college or university magazine or help any societies you are involved with gain media coverage. Charities, particularly small local ones, are always looking for people to raise their profile with the media and/or help them to raise funds. Also ask people working in the field if they could spare an hour to give you advice. They may also be able to offer you some unpaid work experience.

Q ***How do you relax?***

A I relax over a meal with good friends. I also really enjoy travel and the outdoors, ideally combined.

I like to go walking in scenic locations, and I am particularly fond of Australia and the Alps. I am also a trustee of Playing for Success Kent and a member of Canterbury Sunrise Rotary.



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The crowning glory of Kent

A RECORD number of UK companies have achieved one of the country's most sought-after business accolades – and three are in Kent, ***writes Tony Patey***.

Nearly 200 firms have won the Queen's Award for Enterprise 2009 after more than 1,000 applied nationally.

Kent winners are Educational Cultural Exchanges in Chislehurst, which develops educational programmes for American students; Kemet International of Maidstone, which makes diamond products for precision polishing; and food firm Maviga of Yalding.

They all won the Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade.

The awards are held for five years and winning businesses are entitled to fly the award flag and display the emblem on their marketing and products. Here we profile the three Kent winners:

Very polished performer still on the cutting edge

KEMET International employs 64 people and manufactures diamond abrasive consumables for high-precision lapping and polishing, pictured left.

Established in 1938, it started by importing woodworking machines to manufacture the Mosquito fighter-bomber used in World War Two, before expanding into diamond abrasives.

Today it has operations across Europe, Asia, the Far East and Australia. It has consistently increased its export earnings over six years from £2.7 million to nearly £5m per annum. Exports now account for 65 per cent of total earnings.

Joint managing director Dr Michael Riedl said: "We would like to thank our customers, suppliers and employees and look forward to working with them in the future."

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Finger on the world's pulse

•MAVIGA International (Holdings) employs eight people and started trading in 1994. It originates, processes and supplies all varieties of dried edible pulses.

It is a previous award winner, and its market coverage is global. Japan, Egypt, Algeria, South Africa and Spain account for 40 per cent of export sales. In 2008, 10 new markets were developed. Overseas sales have increased by 69 per cent since 2006, equating to more than £40 million.

Over 90 per cent of its products are sold overseas. Chairman and managing director Marcus Coles said: "We are a small team of highly motivated and hard-working individuals who all play their part. To win this prestigious award for a second time is a clear indication of our commitment to quality. We are proud to have been honoured in this way."

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RT: Rate type **R%:** Rate percentage **L:** Loan **U:** Until **OD:** Other details

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WOOLWICH
R%: 4.09% **L:** 70% **U:** 31/07/2011 **OD:** £1,034

MARSDEN
R%: 3.54% **L:** 70% **U:** 30/04/2011 **OD:** £1,123

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RT: TRACKER **R%:** 2.99% **L:** 75% **U:** 2 YEARS **OD:** £2,310

NATIONWIDE
RT: TRACKER **R%:** 3.38% **L:** 75% **U:** 3 YEARS **OD:** £1,015

WOOLWICH
RT: TRACKER **R%:** 3.24% **L:** 70% **U:** 31/07/2012 **OD:** £1,034

MARSDEN
RT: TRACKER **R%:** 3.25% **L:** 70% **U:** 30/04/2011 **OD:** £1,123

• THESE RATES CANNOT BE GUARANTEED AND ARE CORRECT AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS

MIKE CLARK

In Eisenhower's mighty shadow

FORMED in 1987, Educational Cultural Exchanges (International) employs 11 people and develops educational and cultural travel programmes, primarily for American students.

It has a growing business base including Europe, Israel and China.

Programmes focus on personal development and experiences through community work, briefings from politicians and industrialists, family stays and adventure activities, as well as visits to attractions.

It operates the London International Youth Science Forum, which this year celebrates its 50th anniversary of bringing science students to the UK. The firm's overseas earnings have quadrupled in the last six years from its markets in the US (75 per cent), Europe (20 per cent) and the Far East and China (five per cent).

Managing director Mike Clark said: "We are delighted to have been honoured with such a prestigious award.

"Much of our early work, before it became ECE, was created for a world leader, US president Dwight D Eisenhower, who saw international travel as the opportunity to break down cultural barriers and make the world a better and safer place."

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Global epidemic of security breaches

By **TONY PATEY**
tony.patey@kosmedia.co.uk

BREACHES of data security is one of the biggest problems for businesses.

In 2008 alone, more than 280 million records were compromised worldwide – more than the previous four years combined.

That's one of the main findings of an investigation by South East-based Verizon Business, a global communications and IT provider.

Its forensics team analysed thousands of data points from investigations around the world and found that 91 per cent of all compromised records were attributed to organised criminal groups.

Just about all records were compromised from servers and applications, and three quarters of breaches came from external sources. Two thirds were discovered by a third party, and one third implicated business partners.

The firm's Wade Baker said: "2008 will likely be remembered as a tumultuous year. Among the headlines of economic woes came reports of some of the largest data breaches in history.

"These events served as a reminder that, in addition to our markets, the safety and security of our information could not be assumed either."

An astounding 285 million records were compromised. In the more successful breaches, the attacker exploited a mistake committed by the victim, hacked into the network, and installed malware to collect data.

Only 17 per cent of attacks were designated to be highly difficult, yet they accounted for 95 per cent of the total records breached. So, while hackers prefer soft targets, they do seem to know where best to apply the pressure when motivated.

Mr Baker said: "The best defence against data breaches is, in theory, quite simple – don't retain data. Since that isn't realistic for many organisations, the next best thing is to retain only what is required for business or legal reasons, to know where it lives and flows, and to protect it diligently.

"The majority of breaches occur because basic controls were not in place or because those that were present were not consistently implemented across the organisation.

"A large proportion of attackers gain access to enterprise networks via default, shared, or stolen credentials. Furthermore, organisations seem to have little visibility into this problem.

"It's certainly best to prevent such incidents in the first place, but a second line of defence is to review accounts for signs of abuse or anomalies.

"Whatever the sophistication and aggressiveness of attacks, the ability to detect a breach when it occurs is a huge stumbling block for most organisations.

"Whether the deficiency lies in technology or process, the result is the same – and few victims discover their own breaches."

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Saving cash and the environment by 'going virtual'

THOUSANDS of small business owners are discovering the benefits of 'going virtual' – it can result in huge cash savings and is environmentally friendly.

Virtual businesses are flourishing in the economic downturn and online freelance marketplace PeoplePerHour.com has grown by more than 500 per cent in one year.

With widespread broadband internet access and new online resources, it's increasingly easy to conduct business entirely online, eliminating costs associated with permanent staff and office leases.

Thousands of start-up businesses are keeping costs to a minimum by linking up with skilled individuals online to work on ad hoc projects.

It isn't only start-up businesses that are going virtual. Some well-established traditional enterprises are revising their business models entirely and adopting virtual systems to cut costs and boost profits.

For example, sales consultancy Ask-Kent took the decision to become a virtual business in 2006. Previously a traditional outfit with 10 full-time employees working from a Maidstone office, the company now operates virtually, employing remote freelancers through PeoplePerHour.com and operating entirely online.

Founder Richard Romaine monitors his staff and their work online.

He said: "We have cut overheads by £80,000 per year by going virtual.

"This is the primary benefit of the move, but as a valuable offshoot we have saved about 100 rush-hour journeys per week, which has resulted in a massive reduction in our carbon footprint."

PeoplePerHour.com launched in 2007 and is growing rapidly as a result of the UK's virtual business trend. The site enables businesses to post ad hoc projects for remote freelance workers to bid to work on. In April last year, PeoplePerHour.com had 5,000 users.

Today, the site has more than 28,500.

Don't let data thieves shred your company

SHREDDING confidential data is the best way for businesses to stay safe from identity fraud, according to experts.

A survey by the Association of Chief Police Officers revealed that £20 billion is lost through weaknesses exploited in information security.

Companies House says between 50 and 100 cases of corporate identity fraud occur every month.

Shred Easy, one of the UK's biggest confidential data destruction companies, which has customers in Kent, is urging businesses to step up security during the recession.

Jim Watson, managing director of Shred Easy, said: "Businesses are risking millions by having no confidential data policy in place. Fraud against businesses is rising and will continue to do so during the recession. Companies which protect themselves now will weather the storm of this increase in fraud.

"Creating or updating a confidential data policy must be a priority for businesses as we move deeper into recession. It's not just confidential paper documents that need to be securely destroyed but computer hardware such as disk drives and data sticks.

"With little knowledge or effort, a fraudster can change the registered office of the business, trading address and even names of directors. Companies with a good trading record are then vulnerable if orders for expensive goods are placed and not paid for."

Shred Easy has produced these 10 top tips to help preventing business fraud:

- Create a confidential data policy – if you don't have one you are already in the high risk category for being a victim of data theft.
- Store data safely – don't assume that bagging it up is the end of the matter. Criminals have rich pickings outside business premises where confidential data has been poorly disposed.
- Destroy data properly – shred all confidential data and arrange for a professional company to help store, collect and securely destroy information. Ensure you know where the data is heading.
- Check identities – use credit reference agencies to verify the identity of business customers, suppliers and clients.
- Secure your accounts – don't allow details of your business banking to escape into the public domain. Thieves are adept at impersonating signatures.
- Inform staff – train staff on how to deal with confidential data properly and monitor their behaviour. Most business fraud is committed by people within the business.
- Keep post safe – theft of post is a major issue for businesses. Scammers may try to redirect mail without your knowledge.
- Restrict key documents – don't allow staff to have full access to all your company documents. This applies to paper and digital data.
- Use anti-virus software – businesses still get fleeced by online scammers. Installing credible anti-virus software is necessary to combat this threat.
- Beware of carrying large amounts of confidential data on laptops, data sticks or mobile devices. These small, portable gadgets are magnets for thieves who can exploit your confidential information.

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Timeline

Kent on Sunday sport takes a look back at the county's sporting action of yesteryear

1909

ONE hundred years ago, a thrashing at the hands of West Ham United looked like proving the final straw for Tunbridge Wells Rangers.

The club finished rock bottom of the South Eastern League and attendances were so poor that officials were doubtful they would be able to raise a side for the 1909-10 season.

The club survived, however, and went on to pull in four-figure crowds during the interwar period, playing both Carlisle and Accrington Stanley in the Second Round Proper of the FA Cup in 1930 and 1936 respecively.

• Edward Wentworth Dillon was named captain of Kent. The 28-year-old, from Penge, was a former Oxford Blue who also excelled at rugby, playing at three-quarters for Blackheath and going on to represent England.

'Ted' vindicated Kent's faith in him by skippering his side to the county championship in both 1909 and 1910.

1959

FIFTY years ago, the Faversham Boxing Tournament was allegedly spoiled because too many of the bouts were one-sided affairs.

The nadir for the organisers came when a local hopeful, F Mumford fought T Duff, the county champion.

Mumford was pummelled throughout the first round, hit the canvas at the start of the second and then spared further punishment by the referee.

• Gillingham keeper Alf Bentley was a virtual spectator as the Gills eased to a 2-0 victory over Southport, making just two saves in the entire 90 minutes. The first goal was the result of a goalmouth scramble with the scorer's identity confused – Paul Terry added the second.

1984

TWENTY five years ago, Hull City chairman Don Robinson warned Maidstone United they would have to resolve their boardroom crisis if they wanted to stand any chance of getting elected to the Football League.

On the field the Stones were poised to win the Alliance Premier League, but behind the scenes directors had mounted a coup to depose chairman Jim Thompson, protesting against the "autocratic" way in which he ran the club.

United won the league and Thompson would later win his battle in court, but despite being promised Hull's vote, the Stones were victims of the "old pals act" on election day – and Hartlepool were spared relegation.

Shakey back on track after knee infection

World Superbikes ace playing catch-up after injury

By TOM HOWARD

SHANE Byrne is hoping to kick-start his World Superbike Championship challenge at Assen this afternoon after a disappointing start to the season.

With three rounds completed, Byrne is yet to finish in the top five in his debut season in the series, with sixth place at Qatar his best result so far.

Last time out in Valencia, the Sheppey rider was hampered by a knee infection, which saw him only able to finish ninth and 11th, leaving him 14th in the rider standings.

However, a fully-fit Byrne is hoping to get his season back on track by returning to the world famous Assen circuit in Holland this afternoon.

The circuit known as the 'home of motorcycling' has favoured Ducati bikes in the past, which bodes well for Byrne's Sterilgarda Ducati team. Last year Sterilgarda finished fourth with Ruben Xaus in the hot seat.

Byrne said: "I'm confident the team has potential to fight for the top. I hope to do just that at Assen when I'll be recovered physically.

"I feel like every team in the championship must have taken a bit of a step forward because there is no way we can go from heading the field in testing to a best result of sixth.

"Just about every round so far we've pretty much had the pace. It just hasn't turned into decent races, that said with my infection hopefully gone and a bit of luck, hopefully we'll be much closer to the sharper end."

In the British Touring Car Championship, Motorbase Performance head to Britain's fastest race circuit at Thruxton this weekend hoping to build on the momentum gained from their first-ever win in the series.

The Wrotham-based team had an opening round to remember with driver Rob Collard recording their maiden victory at home circuit Brands Hatch earlier this month.

Jonathan Adam completed a historic weekend for the team by clinching a second place finish in the third race, which helped Motorbase secure third in the team's championship standings.

Team boss David Bartrum is keen to prove to the paddock his team's pace at Brands Hatch was not a fluke and is hungry for more podium finishes.

He said: "Obviously we were delighted to get off to such a good start at Brands Hatch and secure our first win. That has given us some real momentum to take to Thruxton and an incentive to really push hard for more big results."

With the nature of the flat Thruxton circuit and the rear-wheel drive of the BMW car, Bartrum is under no illusion the work needed to reach the top step of the podium once again.

He added: "Thruxton is a really tough circuit though and we will have to work very hard to make sure we are fighting at the front again. We want to keep setting our sights high as always and podiums are the target."

CHALLENGE: Shane Byrne (no 67) says he hopes to put in better performances for his Sterilgarda Ducati team now his knee infection has cleared up Picture: STERILGARDA DUCATI

Former ground where Angels first tread

In the second of a series on defunct sport venues, FRED ATKINS looks at the Angel in Tonbridge

TONBRIDGE Angels owe their unique name to their former ground, the Angel, which lay just to the east of the High Street, between the River Medway and the London to Dover railway line.

The Angels, who formed in 1947, took over the ground and pulled in more than 5,000 fans for their first game in the Southern League, a 2-1 defeat to Hastings United.

The ground's previous tenant was Kent County Cricket Club, who played there from 1869 until Hitler intervened 70 years later.

From 1897 to 1927 the Angel was also home to the Nursery, which produced a series of high-calibre cricketers for both Kent and England, including Colin Blythe, Frank Woolley and Tich Freeman.

JUST HEAVENLY: The old pavilion at The Angel is now the site of a retail park

A similar conveyor belt of talent could be witnessed when the Angels played football there a few decades later.

England World Cup winner George Cohen managed the side during the 1970s, Malcolm MacDonald began his career there as a junior in 1965 and Ron Saunders, the manager who took Aston Villa to their last title in 1981, scored 39 goals for the club during the 1956-57 season.

The Angel Ground's location was the prime reason for its downfall. At a time before politicians had cottoned on to football's electoral value, a site of that size, that close to a town centre was simply too lucrative to be allowed to remain as a sports ground.

In October, 1977, the local council announced plans to redevelop the ground and a protracted, bitter legal battle to ensure the Angels' survival.

The club eventually survived, but only after going to the High Court to ensure they could carry on at a new venue, their present home at Longmead.

The programme for the first game at the new ground hinted at past struggles: "It is an occasion for all those who have stuck with the club during its period of crisis, from chairman Bill Wheeler down; it is an occasion for all those who retained hope in the face of crippling adversity."

It would be difficult to overstate the hideousness of the retail park that now occupies the site.

The sporting connection is maintained, tenuously, by a leisure centre and bowls club, but there's no hint that football was played here and a small plaque is the only reminder that this was once a cricket ground.

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Gain free entry to the hottest ticket on Tour

'Free Thursday' to attract crowds to European Open

By DAVID PRITCHARD

THE European Tour's bold free ticket experiment for the European Open appears to be paying off with demand already surpassing last year's total a month before the tournament tees off.

After a successful debut last July, a star-studded field will return to the London Golf Club, near Ash, on May 28 to compete in the £1.8 million event.

Boosted by the Tour's 'free ticket Thursday' promotion, where fans could apply online to watch the first day's play for free, total attendance was 57,000. This year the offer has been extended to all four days, with 75,000 tickets already claimed by fans online.

Heath Harvey, general manager at the London Club, is delighted with the response so far and believes the final figure will be well in excess of 100,000.

Big crowds

He told Kent on Sunday: "I think in these times sponsors want to see big crowds and that's what they are going to get. It's not a proven business model, but if we get the level of support we expect it will be justified.

"It's terrific the European Tour has done it and it's been so well received. Our aim is to build on the success of last year's tournament.

"The feedback from the players was unequivocal; they liked the course and the crowds. Some tournaments can only attract 8,000 people a day we had 30,000 on the first day and we're looking to going past that figure every day this year."

It is the first time the four-day offer has been trialled in Europe. It has only been used once on the Tour before, at last year's South African Open, which saw record-breaking crowds. With no fees for entrance or parking, it is a gamble, with sponsors hoping the crowds spend once they get to the course.

Ernie Els has already confirmed he will be competing in the tournament. Sergio Garcia, Padraig Harrington and Justin Rose were among the star attractions last year and a similarly strong field is again expected.

It could be further boosted with the potential appearance of John Daly. The maverick American is serving a six-month suspension from the PGA Tour after a series of indiscretions on and off the course.

The cash-strapped former Open Champion is playing the four European Tour events preceding the European Open and could compete on the Kent course, despite an invitation to play in a more lucrative event in Texas in the same week.

Harvey said: "It would be exciting. John Daly would put an extra 10,000 on the gate every day. He's an enormous draw but it's just rumours at the moment."

• ***For more information on how to apply for free tickets, visit www.europeantourtickets.com.***

Picture: GETTY IMAGES

WILD THING: Suspension from the PGA Tour could see big-hitting John Daly cross the Atlantic to take part in the European Open and further boost the expected bumper crowds

Penalty shootout woe for Dynamos

INVICTA Dynamos head coach Kevin Parrish feels his side can look back on the season with pride despite finishing with a sudden death penalty shootout defeat last weekend.

The Mos came back from 2-0 down to force overtime against Nottingham Lions in the play-off final, before losing on penalties in the season finale.

In a rollercoaster climax to the season the Gillingham-based side also lost the final of the National League Cup last month, but did lift the league National Final trophies.

EXIT? Dynamos' Milan Kostolny

Although they fell short of a quartet of titles, Parrish does not want the defeat to Nottingham to cloud an otherwise successful campaign.

He said: "We ran a very good club very close but just didn't have that extra firepower to win. We've picked up two trophies this season – the two we really wanted to win – and were unfortunate not to win the other two."

Parrish completely rebuilt the squad last summer in a bid to freshen up the club. He is not expecting to undertake the same level of recruitment during the close season this year, although four or five changes are expected.

Talks will be held with out of contract players in the next few weeks, including Slovakian imports Milan Kostolny and Martin Melichercik, but Parrish's priority is to retain netminder Joe White.

He said: "I know there are clubs looking at him. I've spoken to him and he's more than happy to come back and if possible he will be one of my first signings in the next couple of weeks."

Fight night at uni

EAST Kent's big boxing night of the year is here again and there are still a few tables available on one of the best sporting nights out of the year.

If you like boxing and want to take your staff or clients and help raise money for Canterbury Amateur Boxing Club, tickets are available from £35 per head, or why not book a table?

The show is on Friday, May 1, at Rutherford College, University of Kent in Canterbury. Contact Lee on 07968 912541 or email murray05@btinternet.com.

Claire in drive for sponsor

WHEN Claire Aitken came through qualifying to earn a place on the Ladies European Tour, she could have been forgiven for thinking financially she had hit the jackpot after years in the amateur game.

A nerveless display at qualifying school in January saw the 23-year-old gain her card for the first time.

It grants her access to the 2009 Tour, where the continent's best female golfers will compete weekly for prize funds worth hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Gravesend's Aitken is due to make her debut at the Swiss Open next month, but any hopes of cashing in the moment she turned pro have been wide of the mark.

After three fruitless months of unanswered letters and phone calls to potential sponsors, she will only make it to Switzerland thanks to local support.

"I have some money but it's only bits and bobs that people have donated to me as gifts," she said. "I haven't got an official sponsor; it's just been friends, family and members at the golf club so far.

Picture: ADY KERRY

TOUR DEBUT: Claire Aitken

"It's just the wrong time to be asking people or companies to help you. I'm not the best person at selling myself, I've never been very good at doing that. I knew it was probably going to be harder this year than last year."

Aitken estimates it will cost around £18,000 to cover her expenses on Tour. Since qualifying she has balanced training with fundraising and working in the pro shop at Mid Kent Golf Club, where she is a member.

She said: "The problem is when people know how much you need overall they think £10 or £20 isn't going to make a difference, but it really does all add up. I have enough to compete in the first few events, I've just got to keep doing whatever it takes to stay on Tour."

Aitken knows all her financial concerns would vanish virtually overnight with one good finish on Tour. Not only would it net much-needed prize money, it would put her in the shop window for potential sponsors.

She said: "I'm not nervous yet, just excited to get started. I played in the Ladies English Open last year [finishing tied for 53rd] so I got a taste of what it's like to play on Tour. I'm now looking forward to doing it for real."

CANTERBURY GOLF DAY

Martin Saggers

Martin Saggers Canterbury Golf Day takes place on

Tuesday 12th May, 2009

at The Canterbury Golf Club.

There is a maximum of 20 teams of four on a first come first serve basis. The cost of the day is £260.00 per team (£65.00 per person). Please show your support for Martin in what is set to be a fantastic golf day.

* Bacon Roll & Coffee/Tea on arrival for registration from 11:30am
* Tee-off times starting at 1:00pm
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* Beat the Pro
* Putting competition
* Three course meal
* Heads and tails, Auction and Raffle

For more information please contact Laura on 01892 750131

'I'm happy to be here but it's six years too late'

On-loan bowler Jones aims to give county's injury-hit attack a boost

By GLENN PEARSON

STEFFAN Jones hopes his displays during a loan spell at Kent will give him a chance to make a permanent move to the county.

The Welshman joined on a one-month loan last weekend to help cover injuries to bowlers Simon Cook, Robbie Joseph and Amjad Khan, making his debut in the County Championship game with Northants that finished on Friday.

The fast-medium bowler looks a decent addition to the Kent staff after showing good control and effort on a placid looking St Lawrence wicket, and his presence on the field makes Rob Key's side a bit more vocal.

Fitter

The 35-year-old, who has had stints at Derbyshire and Northants in his 15-year career, told Kent on Sunday he should have joined the county in 2003, but is glad to be given a chance to get some overs under his belt.

He said: "I was close to coming here before as in 2003 I signed for Northants for two years, I had a meeting with Dave Fulton and I should have come here, but I am here now, although I think it's six years too late.

"I have a good couple of years left in me because I have trained really hard and I'm fitter than most players out there who are half my age.

"It's just a case of being given a chance to bowl some overs. I showed on my debut that I can still get the ball through and I'm happy to be playing here."

While most players use a loan spell to prove their fitness and play some cricket – as Martin Saggers did successfully at Essex in 2007 – Jones was cagey about returning to Taunton in a month's time.

"At the minute I am a Kent player and I will give my all for Kent and whether I stay here longer or whatever we will have to see," he said. "Somerset is at the back door, this move has happened because I couldn't get in the Somerset side. My main aim would be to get back because that's my club at the moment, but what happens at the end of the season with my contract is another thing."

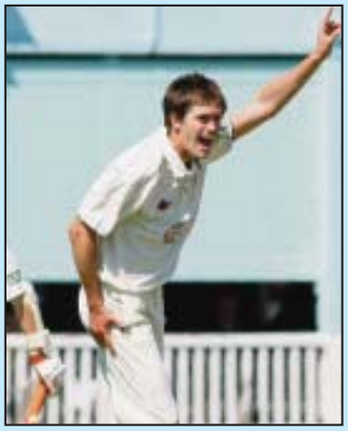
His move to Canterbury came about swiftly, but he admitted he jumped at the chance to ply his trade with Rob Key's side.

"I'm good friends with Martin van Jaarsveld and he phoned me to tell me that Kent had asked if I could come on loan," he said.

"When I heard that I jumped at the chance because at the time I wasn't playing for whatever reason.

"I trained hard in the winter and bowled nicely in pre-season but I seemed to still be middle of the bunch, but now I just have to prove that I'm better than who is playing at the moment."

Picture: IGOR KUPCO


DEBUT: Phil Edwards made his County Championship bow Picture: IGOR KUPCO

Edwards aiming to make most of big chance

INJURIES to Kent's frontline bowlers presented a chance for Phil Edwards to make his County Championship debut this week and it's one the young seamer is hoping to build on, *writes Glenn Pearson*.

The 25-year-old, who became the first Sheppey-born cricketer to represent Kent in the meantime, made a tidy if not spectacular county debut in Kent's first championship game of the season against Northamptonshire at St Lawrence.

With Amjad Khan, Simon Cook and Robbie Joseph all out with injury and Ryan McLaren away with the Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League, skipper Rob Key opted to hand Edwards a debut ahead of fellow paceman Warren Lee.

"It was really unexpected to be honest, I did alright last year so it was good to be given a go and I really enjoyed it," Edwards said. "It wasn't really too nerve-racking as I have been around the team for the last few weeks during pre-season and in the winter so I was confident being around them and making my debut.

Opportunity

"I think I bowled alright, I spoke to Keysey before the game and he wanted me to do a holding job, going at less than three an over and that's what I did, so I did my job for him. I was quite happy with how I did and was pretty unfortunate not to pick up a wicket."

With Cook and Joseph expected to be close to a comeback next week and Khan and McLaren potentially available towards the end of May, Edwards, who plays Kent League cricket at Sittingbourne side Gore Court, is aware he needs to grasp the opportunity with both hands.

He said: "I was pleased to get a go, I know there have been a few injuries in the camp so I have been given an opportunity and it is up to me to take it really.

"It's a long season and now that I have been given an opportunity I have to try and secure my position if I can and it's up to me to grasp it."

Edwards is a product of the Kent youth system, having progressed from the under-15 side to the second XI before he went to Cambridge University where he made his First Class debut in 2004, followed by a stint with the second XI at Sussex.

A call from Academy director Phil Relf saw him return to St Lawrence last season where he played in the second team, showing enough to be given a development contract during the winter.

During the off season he benefitted from a masterclass from Australian Test legend Dennis Lillee during a pace bowling camp in Chennai.

Ford set for return

KENT'S exiled director of cricket, Graham Ford, is hopeful he may be in a position to join up with the squad at the beginning of next week.

The South African has been stuck in his native country awaiting clearance for a visa, but completed an English literacy exam on Thursday – a requirement of the new regulations – and is hopeful he will be given clearance to fly to England in the next few days.

VISA TROUBLE: Graham Ford

The 48-year-old had hoped to join the squad during their pre-season preparations, but missed taking the required tests, having contracted mumps.

Kent had tried to get him seen quicker, but Ford has only this week been able to sit the literacy test and have the relevant checks done.

He told Kent on Sunday: "I have made some progress and I hope to be able to leave in the next day or so. I completed the literacy tests and am awaiting those results, it's a bit of leg work and has been slow and frustrating, but hopefully everything is now done."

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MPs' slam 'ludicrous' level of club spending

County FA chief hits back at damning report

By FRED ATKINS

MEMBERS of Parliament aren't usually strapped for ideas on how to spend other people's money.

So there was a certain irony when the All Party Parliamentary Football Group produced a report this week, lambasting top clubs for "financial doping".

Condemning what it described as "ludicrous levels of borrowing", the report claimed that so-called soft loans from benefactors to football clubs were a recipe for catastrophe and made 27 separate recommendations as to how the game might get its house in order.

While the report's main target was the Premier League, the message also applies in Kent, where virtually every senior club above Kent League level has faced some kind of financial crisis in the past decade.

Gillingham have had to restructure a multi-million pound debt with the Royal Bank of Scotland, and Ebbsfleet have a serious membership shortfall.

Meanwhile, Margate, Folkestone, Ashford, Tonbridge, Dover, Maidstone and others have all experienced crises of varying severity, with playing budgets slashed and talk of imminent financial meltdown predicted.

Picture: IGOR KUPCO

TOUGH TIMES: Keith Masters says Kent clubs are doing their best to survive the credit crunch

It is, however, rare, for a club to actually fold. The last time a senior club went under in the county was in the 2000-01 season when Sheppey United and Canterbury City both withdrew from the Kent League, but this was unusual.

Nor is there anything new in football clubs facing financial problems, as a glance at any club history will prove.

The chief executive of the Kent County FA, Keith Masters, believes there isn't a major problem at a local level. "Money's tight everywhere, but clubs are cutting their cloth accordingly," he said.

"You hear of one or two players who are doing the rounds and might get offered an extra tenner a week to move somewhere at Kent League level, but you pay what you pay people."

Some observers have argued that a salary cap would help, but Masters feels at a local level this is both immoral and unworkable.

"I don't think you could do that," he said. "There's an argument that it's a restriction of people's human rights and you don't say to Asda you should limit what they pay the people who stack their shelves, do you? People pay what they can afford."

And traditionally, clubs have always lived beyond their means – even in the Kent League playing budgets of £2,000 per week are not unheard of. Gate receipts and bar takings have never fully subsidised wages, with the difference being made up by wealthy local benefactors.

As one club chairman said: "It's my money. Why shouldn't I spend it how I want to spend it?"

Play-offs a rude awakening for Gills fans

GILLINGHAM fans are dismayed at the scheduling for the League Two play-offs which could see them forced to get up before dawn to see the biggest game of the club's season.

Mark Stimson's side went into yesterday's penultimate game of the league season against Bury with a slim chance of automatic promotion, but the likelihood is that their promotion hopes will be decided through the play-offs.

The games will be shown live on satellite television, but the second legs of the League Two semi-finals on Sunday, May 10, coincide with key Premier League games.

The only way to avoid a clash is to schedule the kick-offs at 11.30am and 6.30pm.

With the exception of Dagenham & Redbridge, all Gills' potential opponents are in the north.

Alan Liptrott, co-editor of fansite gillsconnect.com, believes the timings will make fans think twice about travelling.

He said: "It just seems so unfair that we might have to go to Rochdale for 11.30am on a Sunday. To get there in time fans would have to set off at about 6am.

"Without a shadow of a doubt the numbers travelling away will go down. I think a lot of fans will watch it down the pub and save their money in the hope of going to Wembley for the final."

If Gills finish fourth or fifth, the home leg will be on the Sunday. Even in this scenario the prospect of a morning kick-off, notorious for their lack of atmosphere, hardly seems fitting for what would be the most important game of the season.

Gills boss Mark Stimson sympathises, but believes under the circumstances it would not be a problem.

He said: "The morning games never have the same buzz, but I think when you are in the situation of a second leg and the chance of going to Wembley it will be different."

Picture: KEITH SLATER

UNHAPPY: Gills fans will have to set off early if the club has to take part in the play-offs

CALLED UP: Aaron Steele will drive for the Britain A1GP team at Brands Hatch

Young driver out to Steele A1 limelight

ASPIRING single-seater racer Aaron Steele will compete on the world stage after receiving a surprise call-up to the Great Britain A1GP team for the penultimate round at Brands Hatch next weekend.

The Chatham-based driver has been unable to secure a drive for the 2009 season due to a lack of finance and the call-up will be a significant boost for his fledgling career.

The 20-year-old, who was short-listed for the McLaren Autosport Young Driver of the Year after impressing in the Formula Palmer Audi Championship, will take part in two free practice sessions at the Kent circuit next Friday. Steele is looking forward to competing against some of the best drivers in the world.

He said: "I've been given a great opportunity to showcase my talent and I am looking to do the best job possible. It will be the first time I have driven the car and I am sure it will be a real eye opener. I really cannot wait. Hopefully I will impress people, get myself noticed and maybe even come back to do A1GP in the future.

"As I live so close I will have a lot of friends and family coming to support me. Brands Hatch is my favourite circuit in the world so it's hard to put my feelings into words, especially as I will be driving such a great car."

Dan Clarke of team GB will be in the hot seat for the sprint and feature race to be held on Sunday, May 3.

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Parnell signing represents Kent coup

KENT'S new overseas signing Wayne Parnell will add much-needed variety to the county's bowling attack, according to director of cricket Graham Ford, ***writes Glenn Pearson.***

The 19-year-old left-arm seamer agreed terms with the county on Thursday, initially for a six-week period, although Ford told Kent on Sunday that Parnell could possibly stay for the season if not selected by South Africa.

Kent were hopeful the South African international would obtain a visa and arrive in time for today's Friends Provident Trophy game against Somerset at Taunton, but that wasn't the case when KoS went to press.

Parnell has played only 11 first-class games for his native Eastern Province Warriors side, taking 27 wickets at an average of 33.25.

In his four one-day international appearances to date for the Proteas, he has claimed six wickets at an average of 31 with a strike-rate of a wicket every 36 deliveries.

His last international appearance was on April 13, when he played against Australia at his home ground in Port Elizabeth.

Ford said the fast bowler will be a good replacement for Stuart Clark who was recalled by Australia.

He said: "Wayne is a young cricketer who has come through in South Africa, bowls left arm and swings it nicely at a reasonable pace. He captained South African under-19s and showed he has a mature head on his shoulders, as well as a fantastic work ethic.

"He was seen as an all-rounder in earlier days but has now come through as a front-line bowler with the national side. Being a left-arm seamer, he will certainly give us a bit of variety."

Although Parnell's signing is for an initial six weeks – the same length of time afforded to Clark – Kent will be monitoring his involvement with South Africa to see if the move could be extended to the end of the summer.

Ford said: "He is pretty certain to be in South Africa's side for the World Twenty20, but if he does not make that, then there is a chance he could stay with us longer."

Picture: GETTY IMAGES

OPTIONS: Overseas signing Wayne Parnell will add variety to the attack

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FLEET FACE TEAM CUTS OVER LACK OF FUNDING

Club hit by new cash crisis

EXCLUSIVE
By **TOM HOWARD**

EBBSFLEET United could face a significant reduction in their playing squad for next season unless £80,000 can be raised in the next two months.

The Blue Square Premier club, who are owned and run by internet community MyFootballClub, held an open meeting this week to discuss the club's future, where it was revealed only five players have contracts for next season.

Money

Chairman John Moules insisted the club was not in debt, but pointed out that in order to retain the management staff and players for next season, a figure of £80,000 has to be found.

He said: "We have money at the club and we are not going to go broke tomorrow, but what we are looking for is to bring money in as early as possible so we can get players together in July for next season.

"All we are saying is there is not enough to meet the going forward requirement. We have got enough to retain some players now. This year's playing budget was £10,000, then you have got all the costs that go with that. In an ideal world that is what we want again and that comes to a cost of £40,000 a month."

Moules also told Kent on Sunday that the £250,000 accrued from last season's Wembley visit in the FA Trophy and the £150,000 from the sale of striker John Akinde has been spent, leaving the club in need of added funds to offer contracts to the existing squad.

Only goalkeeper Lance Cronin, Michael Gash, Darius Charles, Michael West and Steven Springett are tied in for next season, while manager Liam Daish and the rest of the squad are left waiting until it's known the club has the funds available.

A number of initiatives were discussed at the meeting in order to raise the money, which included supporters being urged to buy season tickets and making monetary contributions, such as paying £5-a-week.

The MyFC board is also looking at potential investors to help the club's plight.

One idea that the club are seriously considering is a radical change in the MyFC subscription fee.

As it stands, members pay a £35 subscription to become a part-owner of the club. After membership renewals suffered a significant drop in February from 32,000 to around 10,000, the club are to discuss the proposal of scaling down the membership to 5,000 who will all pay £100-a-year subscription.

However, no-one from the MyFC operating team attended the meeting to field questions from angry and worried supporters.

Fleet Trust chairwoman McQueen believes the club is at risk if the funds are not found in time before next season begins.

She said: "Now is the time for supporters to show how much they love the club and contribute to the playing budget."

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